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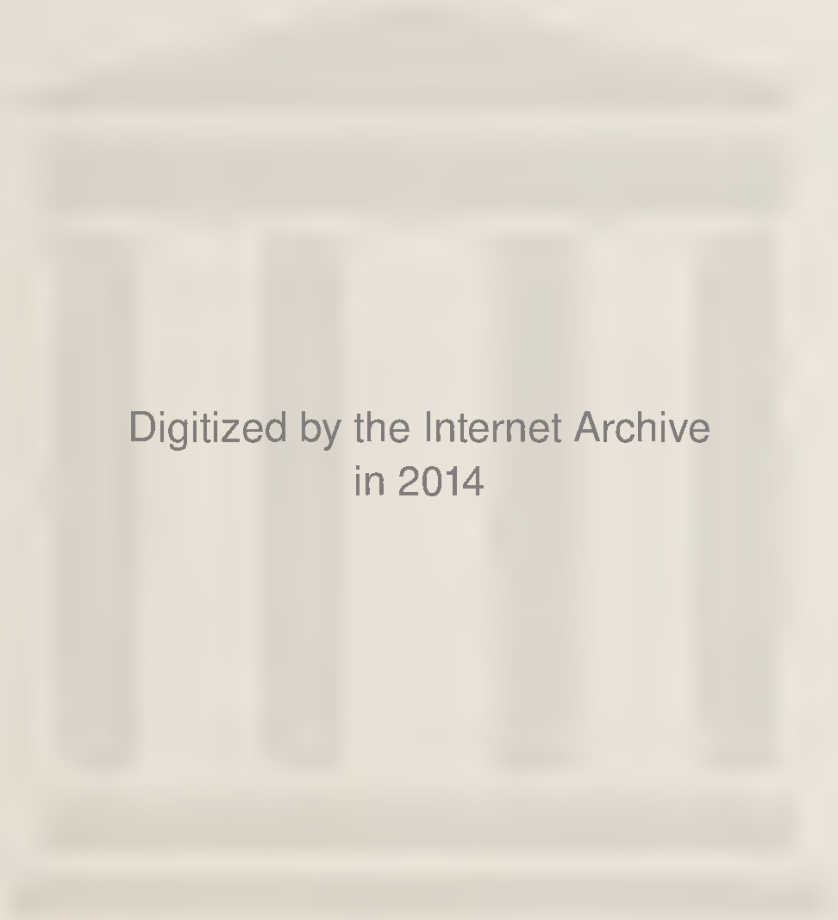

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REV. EBENEZER PORTER, D.D.

President of the Theological Seminary, Andover.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ANDOVER.

BY LYMAN MATTHEWS,

Pastor of the South Church, Braintree, Mass.

BOSTON:

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PREFACE.

"A man's life may be so uniform," said the subject of the following Memoir, when speaking of a character he much admired, "that no splendid incidents shall fix the eye of curiosity; no glare of genius shall attract the admiration of the multitude; and yet a sound understanding, a steady piety, and an habitual course of beneficent action, shall secure him an imperishable reputation; while others are gazed at as prodigies of excellence, for a moment, and then forgotten." A happier illustration of the truth of this remark, it may perhaps be difficult to find, than that which is furnished by the life and character of its lamented author. He was not formed to dazzle or astonish; but to be eminently useful in a steady course of Christian action. The reader of his biography will not therefore expect aught that is novel or startling. He will expect only the history of the wise and faithful pastor, the discreet and devoted teacher of candidates

for the holy ministry, the constant friend, the active, yet unassuming patron of every judicious enterprise for the advancement of piety and philanthropy.

The likeness prefixed to the Memoir, though an exact copy of the painting from which it is taken, and which is in most respects a perfect work, exhibits a slight frown which was never observable on Dr. Porter's countenance, unless he was exercised with severe pain, or was engaged in intense study. For this defect in the portrait, he attributed no blame to the artist, who was a master in his profession: but supposed it to be owing to the structure of the room in which he sat for the painting, and to a temporary weakness of his eyes which rendered the light painful.

The biographical sketch of the Hon. Thomas Porter, though somewhat more extended than is usual in such cases, is inserted with the belief that it will render the volume more valuable to the numerous circle who were acquainted both with the father and the son; and with the hope that the intrinsic excellence of the character, and the obvious bearing of the father's counsels and example on the character and usefulness of the son, will render it instructive to the general reader.

The *form* of this volume has been determined by the peculiar character of the materials. Dr. Porter did not allow himself to keep a diary, nor even a journal of sufficient extent and particularity to impart variety and animation to a biography. Denied the fund of interesting matter usually derived from these sources, the compiler has been left to a choice between the al-

ternatives of making the narrative of Dr. Porter's life brief, or of protracting it by the relation of minute and unimportant incidents.

Should any one inquire why the letters of Dr. Porter are not inserted in some consecutive order, as is usual in the compilation of Memoirs? it is replied *first*,—the compiler feels a strong objection to the indiscriminate publication of familiar letters to the extent, to which they have often been presented to the public. They may interest particular friends, but of what use are they, in general, to the community? What must be the influence of their publication on the literature of our country? *Secondly*,—Dr. Porter's letters were mostly brief documents relating to business, and in general are not proper for publication. As he was an invalid, and rarely left home except in pursuit of health, his letters written to intimate friends, to whom they are almost exclusively addressed, contain, with few exceptions, a minute account of his state of health; his symptoms; the remedies he employed, and their effects; and though full of interest to those for whom they were intended, they would be tiresome to most readers. Hence the necessity of presenting extracts only from those that are inserted. There was one friend out of his family circle with whom he kept up a familiar correspondence through life, the Rev. Zephaniah Swift, of Derby, Connecticut. But his letters to this individual are made up chiefly of references to his state of health; or of confidential remarks respecting the men and measures which were attracting public notice, when they were written. And though many facts of interest might be gathered (some such have been

gathered) from these letters, the publication of most of them would be an obvious violation of propriety.

His letters relating to controverted theological subjects, which are limited in number, in connection with a frank expression of his own views, contain also frequent allusions to the character and spirit of individuals, which, from their very nature, he must have considered confidential. As most of these individuals are still living, delicacy, not to say justice, requires that these allusions should be suppressed. Dr. Porter was one of the last men to *proclaim* another's failings, intellectual or moral, or to inflict a needless wound on the feelings of others, even in supporting a good cause; one of the last, indeed, to venture a doubtful approach to limits prescribed by delicacy, much more a doubtful step across those limits. Could he now speak from the narrow bed where his ashes repose, he would say what his whole course of conduct, as a man, a friend, a Christian, a minister, a teacher unequivocally said—"Let not my memory be a seed of discord among brethren." Yet, if the writer, whose happiness it has been to enjoy peculiar facilities for becoming acquainted with his character, has not studied that character in vain, he would also require that sentiments, a distinct avowal of which he believed was demanded by the interests of Zion, should not be suppressed. He was fearless in the expression of his views—was above disguise. It would be doing him injustice, therefore, to suppress his known opinions on any important subject. For the bearing of these on the favorite views or measures of others, the compiler does not consider himself responsible. His duty is performed, if he executes a

faithful portraiture of the character he has undertaken to delineate.

With these views, the Memoir, which has been delayed much beyond the compiler's intentions, partly by unavoidable engagements, but chiefly by his ill health, is offered to the Christian public; with the hope that it may perpetuate the influence of its lamented subject, and thus prove instrumental in advancing the sacred cause to which his life was devoted.

Braintree, March 22, 1837.

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MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HON. THOMAS PORTER.

Design and utility of biography—Birth—Early life—Settlement in Cornwall, Conn.—Removal to Vermont—Civil offices—Retirement from public life—Mental, moral, and Christian character—Retains his faculties to extreme age—Last letter—Decease.

It was a happy device of the ancients, to perpetuate the memory of those whom they loved or admired, by preserving their statues in their dwellings and places of public resort. There is something akin to this practice, in the delineation of departed worth by the pen of biography; something much better adapted permanently to secure in the highest degree the results at which it aimed. The chisel or the pencil may delineate noble features, may forcibly express characteristic energy and fire, or benevolence and kindness; may in a word mould a form before which the observer bows with admiration. By these means the skilful artist may group together the most impressive personages or events of a passing scene. Biography does not present the form, indeed, in its actual proportions; does not present the features glowing with life, the eye seeing, the lips impatient to speak; but it does more,—it does that which the highest skill of sculpture and painting cannot reach. It follows

the man in his course through life; presents him in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, in employment and relaxation. It tells us of qualities which the countenance cannot express—qualities implanted by Sovereign Grace; of a life of holy feeling and action, and of enjoyments inseparable from them. It brings the portraiture to the fireside and the closet, and calls us to free, intimate, unrestrained communion with departed wisdom and piety. It tells us by what efforts these qualities were acquired or nurtured. It tells us of spiritual conflicts, and bids us admire and lean upon that grace which won the victory. In it as in a glass we see ourselves—what we are, and what we should be. Is the portrait that of the unregenerate?—It teaches us that "sin is exceedingly sinful," however prepossessing the habiliments in which it is arrayed. Is it that of him who has attained the "fullness of the stature of a perfect man in Christ?"—We are admonished of neglected duty; are invited, urged, allured to its performance. He, who "being dead yet speaketh," leads the way. Are our hearts susceptible of salutary impressions?—It matters little what was the vocation, or what the circumstances of the departed.

"With moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity,
In Statesman, Priest, and humble citizen."

Several months previous to his decease, Dr. Porter informed the writer that he intended to prepare for publication, a brief sketch of the life and character of his honored father. He had to some extent collected the materials; though in consequence of ill health and the pressure of official and other engagements, he had done nothing further towards its preparation. It seems but a just tribute to the venerable father, and a reasonable compliance with

the wishes of the son, that such a sketch, though lacking the completeness which that son would have imparted to it, should be given to the public. This cannot perhaps be done under any circumstances so well adapted to clothe it with interest, as in connection with the Memoir of the son.

The Hon. Thomas Porter was one of the few who outlive their generation; who, though they once filled a large space in the public eye, are comparatively forgotten in the tranquillity of private life, because others occupy the places of those with whom they were associated in counsel and labor. He was born in Farmington, Connecticut, February 3, 1734, O. S. He bore the name of his great grandfather, who emigrated from England, and was one of the original proprietors of Farmington. His father, on his dying bed, committed to him the direction of his affairs, charging him especially to maintain family worship, and as he was the oldest son, though he was but seventeen years of age, to set a godly example before his younger brothers and sisters. This last charge, as he was not then pious, he felt unprepared to obey; yet filial reverence and affection constrained him to make the attempt. By the blessing of God, his obedience was productive of spiritual benefit to himself. As he led the morning and evening devotions of a circle which from infancy had been taught to join in a father's confessions and supplications, he felt the solemnity of the duty with which he was charged, and the responsibility of the relations he sustained; he felt his own guilt and insufficiency, and repaired to his heavenly Father for pardon and aid. He used, in subsequent life, to refer to his father's dying counsels, especially to his charge respecting family worship, as having been chiefly instrumental in his conversion.

In May, 1757, about six years after his father's decease,

he removed to Cornwall in his native State, where he purchased a farm; and in June, 1758, he was married to Abigail Howe. Respecting his residence in Cornwall, very few facts of much interest can be collected. There is evidence, however, from various military, civil and ecclesiastical offices to which he was elected by his fellow-citizens, that he enjoyed their confidence and esteem. From the year 1767, while he continued in the State, he sustained the office of deacon of the Congregational church in Cornwall; of a magistrate, and a representative of the town in the State legislature.

In 1779, Judge Porter removed to Tinmouth, in the State of Vermont. For some years previous to his removal, this district of country, which had long been known by the designation of "New Hampshire Grants," and which was even then thus designated by all but its inhabitants, had been in violent commotion, because of the right claimed by the State of New York, to hold and dispose of tracts of land which had been sold and confirmed to their occupants by the authority of New Hampshire. It had been decided by the king of Great Britain, to whom the disputed territorial limits had been submitted by the contending parties, that the western shore of Connecticut river bounded the territory of New Hampshire, and that the jurisdiction of the territory in question belonged of course to New York. The government of New York contended that this decision "had a retrospective operation, and determined not only what should thereafter be, but what always had been the eastern boundary of New York, and that consequently the grants which had been made by the governor of New Hampshire were void."* A strenuous and protracted effort was made by New York to enforce this interpretation of the royal decision, even in the face of a subsequent prohibition by the king, of interference with the titles given by New

* Vermont State Papers, p. 20.

Hampshire. The settlers remonstrated, but their remonstrances were disregarded; they petitioned, but were not heard. They saw themselves liable to be forcibly dispossessed of property which to them was exceedingly valuable, and to be thrown unprotected on the mercy of masters for whom they had little affection. In this emergency they fearlessly declared that they would never submit to the usurpation of their neighbors. They leagued together and made the best preparation their means would allow, to defend their rights by arms. They organized a government; established courts of justice; and made other arrangements for the administration of their affairs as an independent State; and with as much regularity as circumstances admitted, their government was in a course of administration when Judge Porter removed to Vermont. This was a period of less commotion, but not of less interest than the preceding ten or fifteen years. He was immediately called by his fellow-citizens to act a prominent part in the affairs of his adopted State. Beside being appointed a justice of the peace, and chosen to several responsible offices in town, he was, in 1780, the year after his removal to Tinmouth, elected a representative to the State legislature. Of that body he was the same year chosen Speaker, which office he held during three successive years, the whole time of his continuance in the house. In 1783, he was transferred to the executive council, of which body he continued a member, with but very brief if any intervals, till his retirement from public life in 1794, when he tendered to his colleagues the following resignation.

"*Gentlemen of the Council, and House of Assembly,*

"I take this opportunity to express the grateful sense I have of the honors done me by the freemen from time to time, in electing me a councilor; and it hath been,

perhaps, as agreeable to me as to any other person, to serve the public in that capacity. Yet my age, and other attending circumstances, incline me at this time to resign my seat in council, and it is my wish to spend the remainder of my time in private life. Yet my attachment to the interest of this government is such, that the freemen may rest assured that I shall use the small share of influence that I may have in private life, to promote the true interest and welfare of this State.

"And now, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the council, I would take my leave of this honorable house of assembly, with the pleasing hope and expectation that wisdom and uprightness will mark all their steps, and in that way meet with the approbation and smiles of Heaven to the latest posterity. THO. PORTER."

By joint vote of the council, and house of assembly, he was honored with the subjoined reply.—

"SIR,—This assembly, sensible of the uprightness and sincerity with which you have so long filled the office of a councilor in this State, regret that the time has arrived when, you say, the infirmities of age have induced you to retire to the private walks of life. In the name of the freemen, they thank you for the patriotic firmness with which you have, for a long series of years, stepped forth in support and vindication of their liberties. Be assured, Sir, you retire with the approbation of your country for your past services, and their ardent wish for your present and future felicity."

While Judge Porter was serving his fellow-citizens in the capacity of a legislator, they were pleased to express their estimation of his talents, and their approbation of his conduct, by calling him to several other offices of high responsibility. In 1781, he was appointed a judge of the

county court for the county of Rutland; in 1784, a judge of the supreme court, in which office he served till 1787; and from '87 he was again a judge of the county court till he resigned in 1790. In 1791, he was a member of the convention which approved and assented to the constitution of the United States, preparatory to the admission of Vermont into the Union. In conversation respecting the frequency with which his fellow-citizens had been pleased to demand his services in various official stations, he remarked that he believed he had held every civil office established by the laws of Vermont, excepting those of governor and lieutenant-governor.

Connected as he was with the legislative councils of Vermont, during a succession of years after she had declared herself an independent State, and while she was seeking from congress an acknowledgment of her sovereignty, and admission into the Union; obliged in various instances, in his official capacity, to be the organ of communication between the state and general governments, Judge Porter unavoidably became deeply interested in political affairs. His interest rather increased than abated, as he advanced in years. While he was in principle and action a *republican*, he was a decided opposer of every thing approaching political licentiousness. While he would secure his own rights, he would consent to no form of government which did not on equitable principles equally secure the rights of all. His political feelings were under the control of piety. When he surveyed his country, it was with the eye of a Christian. When he spoke of the character or the measures of those in authority, it was in the language of piety, dictated by unaffected concern respecting their influence on the well-being of Zion.

Though he had no fondness for military office, he early manifested a readiness whenever his services were need-

ed, to join his fellow-citizens and repair to the scene of danger. He several times held a military commission; in the last instance as captain of a company of "minute men" in the war of the revolution; though it is not known that he was ever permanently connected with any military corps in active service.

In stature, Judge Porter was somewhat above six feet, and in person was uncommonly commanding. His manners were easy and dignified; his address conciliating. To etiquette in his intercourse with others, he was peculiarly attentive; so much so, that even in very advanced age, he used among his friends occasionally to animadvert, with much severity, on the negligence which in this respect he often observed. His whole deportment was characterized by simplicity and uniform kindness.

He was a man of singular *prudence*. This was manifest both in the management of his private affairs, and in the discharge of official duty. Always deliberate, he acted with reference to some distinct and worthy end, and that he might attain this end, he was accustomed, before commencing a proposed course of action, to calculate, as far as human foresight could reach, the bearings and consequences of his conduct. His plans of action being digested, they were pursued with the same deliberation with which they were formed. Hence he was rarely accounted *imprudent*. His acquaintance were wont to confide in his counsel. He was often appealed to as a mediator, in cases of difficulty, in which capacity his practical wisdom qualified him to be very useful. He showed himself, especially, the friend of the oppressed and the suffering.

He was also a man of inflexible *integrity*. No prospect of advancing his secular interests could induce him to compromise with dishonesty. Though with the divine blessing he acquired an ample estate, it is believed that no man was ever disposed to charge him with a want of

perfect uprightness in his dealings. His frequent election to places of honor and trust, was not the result of his own seeking. He was far above the intrigue and machination to which those who are advanced to office often owe their elevation.

His character was not less marked by *decision* and *firmness*. By his fellow-citizens it was understood that he would follow the convictions of duty; consequently, if they wished him to advocate their claims, they had first to convince him that those claims were founded in justice. Whenever called to act in concert with others, these qualities won their confidence. They were equally observable in the government of his family. Here his decisions were law. He aimed particularly to impress upon his children in early life, the restraints of piety, and to implant the principles by which their conduct should be governed toward God and their fellow-men. This he did not so much by frequent, personal addresses on the subject of religion, as by the language of a consistent, holy example. The result was, that his influence, sustained by that of his wife, whose views and feelings happily coincided with his own, was paramount in the formation of their character. To this influence, his son, Dr. Porter, repeatedly and gratefully acknowledges his obligations. Alluding to it, he incidentally remarks, "I ascribe it, under Providence, to the restraints of my early life, to the Christian influence of an excellent father and mother, that I am not a beggar, or an infidel, or a reprobate. Of the obligations I am under to my parents, I hope always to cherish a grateful recollection."

Judge Porter possessed withal exemplary *modesty*. He was first to suspect his fitness for stations of high responsibility, and slow to admit his competency. Content that others should judge of his worth, he was commonly inclined to make liberal deductions from their estimate. In

his ninety-fourth, or ninety-fifth year, he began, at the earnest solicitation of his son, a brief autobiography; but had proceeded only a few pages, when extreme solicitude, lest the attempt should by some be attributed to arrogance, induced him to desist, and destroy what he had written.

Though he enjoyed in early life no other than common advantages for education, his thirst for knowledge and the facility with which he made acquisitions, qualified him to fill his place, with honor to himself and interest to others, in the society of educated and intelligent men; and to preside, to the acceptance of his fellow-citizens, in the hall of legislation and in the court of justice, during a period adapted to prove alike wisdom, and patience, and intrepidity. To native strength of mind, he added practical knowledge and a degree of mental discipline, which rendered him, at times, both attractive and powerful in debate.

But the predominant excellence of Judge Porter was his *piety*. It was *enlightened*. For many years he had contemplated with painful interest the perishing condition of his fellow-men; had watched, especially, the gradual encroachments of irreligion on institutions which, from infancy, he had regarded as sacred and invaluable. When therefore, in the evening of life, he saw organizations springing into being to ameliorate this condition, to perpetuate and extend these institutions, he felt that the desire of his heart had been granted; that "his eyes had seen the salvation of God." He felt no jealousy of the efforts of Christians because they were *new*, but was prepared to lend every organization based on the principles of the gospel, his cordial support.

His piety was *active*. It has already been remarked, that soon after his settlement in Cornwall, Conn., he was chosen a deacon of the church in that town, and officiated

in that capacity during his continuance in the State. On his removal to Vermont he was immediately chosen a deacon of the Congregational church in Tinmouth. The duties of this station he continued to discharge to advanced age, when he was succeeded by his oldest son, Thomas Porter.* The following statement, in the handwriting of Dr. Porter, records an instance of activity and fidelity in an officer of the church, as rare it is to be feared, as it is worthy of imitation.—"My father informed me that for fifteen years after the dismission of Mr. Osborn, Tinmouth enjoyed only occasional preaching. The rest of the time he read sermons, and prayed himself, and kept up the worship of God without assistance, and without the interruption even of a single Sabbath. During this time he was never *once* absent on the Sabbath."

Several of Judge Porter's letters to his children are preserved, which breathe unusually deep and constant religious feeling. With few exceptions they are devoted almost exclusively to religious topics. His letters to his son, Dr. Porter, for several years after he entered the ministry, are chiefly confined to the importance of his office, and contain exhortations to diligence and faithfulness, which we may reasonably suppose exerted a salutary influence on his future character and usefulness. In nearly every letter he describes particularly the state of religion in Tinmouth; mentions minutely the causes which in his view were producing and perpetuating spiritual declension, or awakening Christians to activity;

* This son, at whose house the venerable father died, survived his parent but a week. The day after his father's decease, he prepared for the Vermont Chronicle a brief obituary sketch, when he was himself violently attacked with a fever; lingered a few days, and expired. Dea. Porter for many years, while a resident of Tinmouth, exerted an extensive and happy influence as a member and officer of the church, and repeatedly represented the town in the State legislature.

as though by his own example, he would incite his son to similar habits of observation. No other blessing is alluded to in his letters so frequently, and with so full a measure of gratitude, as the grace of God manifest in the hopeful renewal of all his children but one. Respecting this child, though he rarely gave utterance to his feelings, occasional expressions betrayed intense solicitude. Evidently struggling with inexpressible emotion, a few months before his death, he asked a friend standing at his bedside, as though fearful that his solicitude was sinful, "To what extent is a father's anxiety for the salvation of an unconverted child, consistent with Christian submission?"

The piety which so happily controlled his life, Judge Porter found a rich source of consolation in affliction. In the 79th year of his age, he was called to part with his wife, who, with a spirit kindred to his own, had been a bright example of the power of godliness. At her decease, the bereaved husband, having already passed the appointed limit of human life, supposed that the time of his own departure was at hand, and he was "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart." In a letter subsequently written, he remarks, that "all his enjoyment arose from communion with God, and that he was sustained by evidence of preparation for the rest of heaven."

We cannot with propriety omit a passing notice of the state of society, in which the germ of the character we are contemplating, received the training that determined its future form and growth. Dr. Porter elicited from his father, then in the 93d year of his age, the following facts, which were recorded nearly in the words of the venerable narrator. They are transcribed as reminiscences of days gone by; of usages which secured for Connecticut the honorable appellation—"the land of steady habits."—"Judge Porter was accustomed, in childhood, to see his parents pay so strict a regard to the Sabbath, that all the

labor which it was possible to do, even towards the preparation of food for that day, was done on Saturday. Before sunset, Saturday evening, the vegetables were washed, the pudding, (an indispensable part of every dinner,) was prepared, and a piece of meat made ready for the Sabbath. Though Saturday evening was generally regarded as holy time, Sabbath evening was religiously observed. None were permitted to stroll about the streets for visiting or other unnecessary purposes. The laws requiring the observance of the Sabbath were rigidly enforced by the tithingmen. Great regard was entertained for the services of the sanctuary, and they were punctually attended, though neither wheel-carriages nor sleighs were in use.* The Westminster Assembly's Catechism was taught on the Sabbath, and in the common school. There was but one public school in the society in which he resided, but this was well sustained through the year, being kept in winter by a man; in summer by a female. Family worship was so commonly practised, that in his native town it was

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* The following reminiscences, though somewhat miscellaneous, may interest the reader.

In the meeting-house of Farmington, the children, that they might be under the inspection both of their parents and the minister, were ranged along the principal aisle, on seats prepared for that purpose. When the minister entered, the congregation rose in token of respect.

Judge Porter believed that before he was twenty years old, it was a very general practice of Christians in Connecticut to ask a blessing at table, in a *sitting* posture; afterwards, without discussion, so far as he knew, the practice of *standing* became equally general.

During his youth there was no lawyer in the society in which he resided, chiefly, as he thought, because none was needed.

Jumping, running, and wrestling, were the principal recreations of his youth; these were so much in vogue, as in some instances almost to become the standard of merit.

Judge Porter never saw a potatoe till he was twenty years old. Previously, turnips were generally used.

thought disreputable for a young man, when married and settled in life, to neglect it. To ardent spirits he was in childhood and youth almost a stranger. They were very little used in Farmington; in no case as a common drink. He did not recollect, that during the first half of his life, he ever saw spirits carried into the field for laborers. As might have been expected, where Christian institutions were so reverently observed, vice was discountenanced, and the morals of the community were, in general, blameless."

Very few men retain their bodily and mental powers to advanced age, so unimpaired as were those of Judge Porter. Having possessed an unusually vigorous constitution, he enjoyed uniform health, with scarce an interruption of a day, till the last year of his life. He used to remark, that "until his fifty-third year, he knew not that he had ever experienced fatigue; that he did not recollect the day, previous to that time, when, at the close of a day's labor, he did not feel as well able to proceed with his work, as if he had enjoyed the best opportunity for repose." His youngest son informed the writer, that his father, at the age of eighty-five, would take his scythe and go into the field, in company with others, and without any apparent fatigue, perform as much labor for half a day as any of his companions. Although he made such a disposition of his property as to be exempt from the necessity of labor, it was his recreation long after the period just named, to spend a part of each day in some useful employment on the farm, devoting the remainder of the day to reading, of which he was enthusiastically fond. About a year before his death, he rode forty-five miles in a single day to visit a daughter. To the inquiries of his friends respecting his health, he usually replied, "I enjoy as good health as I ever did, excepting the infirmities of age." He uniformly regarded death, however, as

near at hand. Being aware that very aged persons often drop away without premonitory illness, he used, for years, to say, that when he "laid his head upon his pillow, and closed his eyes in sleep, he expected to awake in eternity."

Of the extent to which he retained his *mental* faculties, the following letter, written in his 99th year, affords an illustration. It was addressed to a grandson and his wife in Michigan, to whom he was much attached.

"My dear Grandchildren,

"I have such evidence of the overruling providence of God, that I believe there is nothing in this world which is not under the superintendence of that providence. You have been under its protection ever since you have been on the journey of life, and you have great reason for gratitude and thankfulness to the Giver of all your mercies.

"It is so difficult for me to write, and will be so difficult for you to read my letter, that I shall omit every thing of a worldly nature; only I advise you, if you meet with embarrassments, to apply to Judge C—— for aid, and I trust he will be willing to assist you by advice or otherwise. I shall confine myself principally to family religion. If you have arrived at your expected place of residence, I advise you to adopt Joshua's resolution, that you and your household will serve the Lord, the living God. I advise you to set up and maintain family religion, reading some part of the sacred Scriptures every morning, with prayers morning and evening.—Christ said to his disciples, and now says to you, 'Enter into thy closet, shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.' Any place, retired from the world, will answer for a closet for Christ Jesus. I advise you to withdraw from the world

and spend some time in prayer and meditation. I have understood that when you was at C—— school, you was a subject of awakening and of hopeful conversion; it was the best news I ever heard;—but that you have since lived like the rest of the world. I hope you will find pleasure in religion, and go on your way rejoicing. If religion is burdensome, you have reason to conclude that your heart is not right in the sight of God. Pray earnestly for a right frame of mind. Nearness to God in duty is the greatest satisfaction the Christian ever enjoys. Let not the world engage your whole attention; you may live comfortably with a small portion of this world, but without religion you cannot be happy.

"I firmly believe you would be glad to add something to my comfort in my old age. There is nothing you can do that will add so much to my comfort, as to furnish me good evidence that you and your family are engaged in religion. I do not know what religious privileges you enjoy, but I do not expect you will be favored with preaching for some time. If you are destitute of preaching, I advise you, if you have religious neighbors, to meet upon the Sabbath, and pray and read the Scriptures, or other books on divinity. But if you cannot be favored with such meetings, I advise you to withdraw from worldly concerns, for reading, prayer, and meditation.

"A word to N——. Dear N——, I advise you to assist your dear husband in the important duties of family religion. I expect the adversary will be casting stumbling-blocks in the way of religious duty; you must remove them. If you should be blessed with a family of children, join hand in hand in training them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Let not the world prevent your attending to the one thing needful. If these few lines should reach you, you will trace in them a striking evidence of the effects of old age on the human frame. It is

so difficult for me to see and to write, that I must close with this advice:—keep near to God in duty, and God will be near to you with a blessing. I shall commit each of you to the care and keeping of that God, who hath promised to protect and bless all that put their trust in him. Live in love, live in peace, and the God of love and peace be with you.

"I must bid you adieu by subscribing myself your aged and affectionate grandfather,

"THOMAS PORTER."

An equally clear indication, perhaps, of the remarkable degree to which Judge Porter retained his mental faculties, was his correct perception of their gradual decay. Of such perception, indeed, he used modestly to acknowledge himself incapable. "I feel," says he in a letter to his son, several years before his death, "I feel my strength decaying, but I consider myself incompetent to judge of the failure of my *mental* faculties." Consequently, towards the close of his life, he was rarely heard to express an opinion in regard to secular concerns, which might by others be called in question, and might be imputed to a lack of judgment. He would sometimes say, respecting the miscalculations of others, "I saw they were wrong, but did not express my conviction, because they were sanguine, and would have deemed my opinion of no value." The first certain indication which he discovered of the decay of his faculties, was, to use his own expression, "an inability to cast figures in his head, as he had formerly done."

He was wholly exempt from the peevishness, common to advanced age. Every attention from his friends was gratefully received. It was rare indeed that any designed act of kindness done for him, did not seem to meet his full approbation. It was even more rare that he uttered

an expression of dissatisfaction. The last years of his life he manifested affecting solicitude lest he should be a burden to his friends. While spending a few months with his youngest daughter, about a year before his death, she found him several times in tears. When she kindly inquired the cause of his grief, he would reply, "I fear, my daughter, I occasion you more trouble than your feeble health will enable you to sustain." His son, at whose house he died, remarks in his obituary, that "during several months of entire helplessness, previous to his decease, not a murmuring word escaped his lips."

For some years, Judge Porter stood alone. He knew not that one companion of his childhood or youth survived. He regarded himself as belonging to a past age—a man of another generation; and he desired that "his earthly house of this tabernacle might be dissolved, that he might be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven." He longed to depart, that he might be reunited with his early friends in the holy and perfect services and enjoyments of heaven. The vital current ceased to flow, not because obstructed by disease, but because the fountain, which had so long fed it, was exhausted. He came to his "grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." He died at the house of his son, in Granville, New York, May 30, 1833, aged NINETY-NINE YEARS AND THREE MONTHS.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE OF EBENEZER PORTER.

Birth — Childhood — Classical education — Profession of religion — Theological studies and license to preach — Calls to several places — Ordination at Washington — Marriage.

Ebenezer Porter was the third son of the Hon. Thomas Porter, the subject of the preceding sketch. Besides his older brothers, the family consisted of three sisters older, and one brother younger than himself. He was born at Cornwall, Connecticut, Oct. 5, 1772, and removed with his father to Tinmouth, Vermont, in 1779. In childhood, he was distinguished only by loveliness of disposition and propriety of deportment. His principles of action began very early to be formed under judicious parental training; and to this, doubtless, is chiefly to be attributed the uniform correctness of his early conduct. A single instance of his mother's instruction he used to mention as having probably exerted a controlling influence in the formation of his character. While very young, having one day received an injury from some of his mates, he went directly to his mother to unbosom his grief. She said, "My son, treat your companions kindly in return, and you will heap coals of fire on their heads." This precept, if not new to his young mind, had never before attracted his attention. He pondered it, and was enabled, as he hoped, to make it a permanent principle of action.

As he early manifested a fondness for books, and a desire to obtain a thorough education, his parents cheerfully furnished every facility in their power to the accomplishment of his wishes. He commenced his classical studies when twelve years of age, with his brother in law, Rev. Benjamin Osborn, then minister of Tinmouth, and afterward pursued them, until prepared for college, at Bennington, Vt., a resident in the family of Rev. Dr. Swift. He entered Dartmouth college in 1788. Though his health during part of his college life was feeble, he pursued the prescribed course of study, and graduated with his class in 1792. While a member of college he was distinguished for love of order, and cheerful obedience to established regulations. His standing as a scholar indicated respectable intellectual endowments, and habits of diligent and patient application. Says one of his classmates, "he was much distinguished as a scholar while in college. He joined college when young.—I perfectly well remember his appearance at that time. His face was then round, his hair very light as well as his complexion, and his whole appearance exceedingly youthful, fair, and prepossessing. As a speaker he was even at that time much admired." When he graduated, he delivered the valedictory oration. It was during his junior year at college, that he received his first permanent religious impressions.

Having arrived at manhood, many of his characteristics, bodily and mental, bore a striking resemblance to those of his father.

> "All but the wrinkles and the hairs
> Were copied in the son."

He was about six feet in height, and in person well proportioned. His face was thin; his forehead high; his nose well formed and rather prominent; his eyes gray, of

a bluish cast, and expressive of mildness, benevolence, and decision. Though there was nothing very striking in his features, his countenance distinctly indicated intelligence, firmness, and energy.

After leaving college, he spent some months at Washington, Conn., in teaching, in which employment his services were highly acceptable. During this period he made a profession of religion, uniting with the church of which he afterwards became the pastor, then under the care of Rev. Noah Merwin. His theological studies he pursued under the direction of Rev. Dr. Smalley, of Berlin, Conn., and received license to preach in 1794. He commenced his labors as a preacher, by supplying, for a few weeks, the pulpit of Rev. Mr. Hooker, of Goshen, while he was absent on a tour of missionary service. He first preached as a candidate at South Britain, during the last part of 1794, and the first part of 1795, from which place he received a call to settle. About this time, the decease of Rev. Mr. Merwin, of Washington, occasioned a vacancy, for the supply of which, the attention of that people was at once turned to Mr. Porter. Having declined the invitation from South Britain, he consented to preach at Washington a few weeks, though it would seem without any intention of finding a settlement there. The mutual attachment, however, which commenced during his previous residence among that people, was increased by his intercourse with them as a candidate; and he soon received an invitation to become their minister. Respecting this call, he wrote to one of his relatives:—"Though Washington has become to me a peculiarly agreeable place of residence, and though I should choose it on many accounts before almost any place for a home, I cannot remain here unless some circumstances attending the call are changed." Accordingly, he returned a negative answer. A few Sabbaths following he spent at Salisbury,

where he was also favored with an urgent invitation to settle. During his stay at Salisbury, the people of Washington renewed their proposals, with such modifications as he felt constrained to accept. He immediately returned to Washington; and as a text for his first discourse, selected the words of Peter:—"Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?" This discourse was often referred to by those who heard it, as having set forth, in a manner adapted permanently to affect their hearts, the relations and the reciprocal duties of a minister and his people. He was ordained Sept. 6, 1796, having nearly attained his twenty-fourth year; and in May following, was married to Miss Lucy Pierce Merwin, the eldest daughter of his predecessor.

CHAPTER III.

Settled purpose of continuing in Washington—Pastoral labors and their effects—Meeting-house burned—Another erected—Instruction of theological students—Health impaired by labors—Deficiency in salary—Correspondence on the subject—Council called—Address from young men—Meeting of council and result—Services desired at other places—His feelings—Elected a member of C. A. S.—Elected a trustee of Conn. Mis. Soc.—Attends Gen. Assembly Pres. Church—Invitation to Dutch Church at Albany—Request to preach election sermon.

From the moment of Mr. Porter's acceptance of the call from Washington, it seems to have been his purpose there to spend his days. With this purpose he formed his plan of action; a plan sufficiently extensive to embrace the labors of a life of unwearied diligence. In the execution of this plan, he seems to have pursued study, to have performed parochial labor, to have tasked every energy, with a confident anticipation that results would correspond with his efforts. As it is proposed in another connection to exhibit, at some length, his mode of pastoral labor, it is sufficient here to remark, that though no special manifestation of the divine presence and power amounting to a general revival of religion, signalized the first years of his ministry, he had cheering evidence that his instrumentality was owned of God, in the occurrence of frequent cases of hopeful conversion, and in a gradual,

yet constant and very considerable, increase of his church both in numbers and piety. A happy change was soon perceptible, also, in the intellectual and moral character of the youth of his charge. His parish presented to the eye indubitable indications of faithful, skilful, and untiring spiritual husbandry; indications that it enjoyed the culture of a "workman that needed not to be ashamed."

A few years after the settlement of Mr. Porter, an insane person set fire to his meeting-house, and it was saved only by extraordinary exertions. As it was not known how the fire originated, the incendiary was left at liberty. The damages the building had sustained, were scarcely repaired, when the same person kindled another fire in such a position as to render all efforts to extinguish it unavailing, and the edifice was reduced to ashes. The Sabbath following, the pastor addressed his bereaved flock from the injunction of the Apostle, *Let brotherly love continue;* and administered, in a temporary place of worship, the sacramental symbols which his church had hoped to participate in the sanctuary where their fathers worshipped. The indispensableness of mutual forbearance and affection was urged upon his people, especially with reference to the work of erecting another house for God. He presented before them the example of Nehemiah; reminded them of their obligations to imitate his energy, his zeal, and perseverance, and bade them do their duty. In a single week the location of another edifice was determined, the incipient steps towards its erection were taken, and with the same spirit, the enterprise was prosecuted to its consummation. The call to rebuild their sanctuary under the circumstances which have been related, was an essential benefit to the people of Washington, as it developed their resources and thus taught them their strength, while it bound them more strongly to each other, and to their pastor.

Mr. Porter's health, which always suffered from the severe labor he imposed upon himself, suffered yet more, when to parochial duties and severe professional study, he superadded the labor of giving instruction to youth, and afterwards to theological students. To the last undertaking he was urged by several of his brethren in the ministry, who early discovered in him certain peculiar qualifications for the work; and as theological schools did not then exist, he reluctantly consented to receive a succession of students into his family. Partly that the energies of his pupils might be fully employed, and partly that he might secure sufficient time for their instruction, he used to devote to this work the hours spent at the table; assigning at each meal, some topic to be discussed at the next. Each pupil was expected, in his turn, to take the lead in reciting the thoughts of some author, or in offering his own opinions, after which the discussion became general, and was concluded with remarks from the teacher. The prostration of his health, which commenced under this complication of duties, was completed under the pressure of labor incident to a general revival among his people in the years 1804—5. He was now compelled to suspend his labors for nearly a year. Here probably was laid the foundation of the disorder, which, in subsequent life, caused him almost uninterrupted, and often extreme suffering. This protracted suspension of his labors in no respect diminished the attachment of his people to him. Nothing occurred, for a moment, to interrupt the harmony which had prevailed until the year 1809, when a deficiency in his means of support, occasioned by circumstances which he could not control, and which at his ordination could not be foreseen, compelled him to make known to his people his situation, and ask relief at their hands. His correspondence with his people in relation to this matter, he carefully transcribed and

preserved, and though under other circumstances, it might seem desirable to suppress it as furnishing merely a detail of facts of no utility to the public, it becomes a matter of interest, exhibiting as it does its author's opinions respecting the sacredness of the pastoral relation and the desirableness of its permanency; and especially as showing his mode of treating a subject which has often proved to ministers one of great delicacy and difficulty. No single cause, perhaps, has more frequently occasioned the dissolution of the pastoral relation than the one which called forth this correspondence; none is now operating with greater power to render its continuance precarious.*

Being desirous to prevent discussion and excitement, Mr. Porter at first communicated his views to a few influential friends. Failing in this way to secure his end, he drew up the following statement, which he submitted somewhat extensively to individuals in his society.

"I ought, perhaps, to preface this statement by observing, that I never have doubted the friendship of my people. Being but a youth when I accepted your call, I endeavored to enter, with my whole heart, into your interests, and have received many affectionate testimonials of your attachment and esteem, which I shall always remember with sincerest satisfaction. But I have, for

* To this correspondence Mr. Porter prefixed the title:—"Papers showing the cause and progress of the difficulties which led to my dismission from Washington,"—a title which implies that the transcript was made after his dismission, with a design of preserving the fact, that the continued bearing of these difficulties upon his usefulness, had a decisive influence on his final determination to resign his charge and enter a new field of labor. This comports with what is believed to have been his settled purpose, that he would not listen to *any* solicitation to remove from Washington, so long as he should have reason to believe that his usefulness there would continue unimpaired.

years, felt difficulties respecting my support arising from the depreciation of money. These difficulties I have hoped to surmount, under the blessing of Providence, *first*, from the smallness of my family, and the assistance derived from some of my connections—and *next*, from the expectation that my people would, of their own accord, perceive the deficiency of my salary; especially as that deficiency resulted from causes which were *known* and *acted* upon in all the public and private concerns of the country. The difficulties which I have felt still remain; and it is with much reluctance, that I feel it necessary at last to make them known more publicly than heretofore.

"With all the prudence which I have been able to practise, my salary is inadequate to support my family, and the company which it belongs to every minister to entertain. It must be supposed that I have had experience enough to speak with certainty on this subject.

"2. As to support, my salary has not been what I had good reason to think it would be when I was settled. I came here without experience—was attached to this people; and it seemed to be plainly the will of Providence that I should remain here. It was supposed that the troubles of Europe, which had then begun, would soon subside, so that the proposed salary might be sufficient, and I accepted it. Contrary to my own expectation and that of those on whose judgment I relied, many of the articles of living, and all kinds of agricultural and mechanical labor soon rose about *one-third* in price. Of course, the value of my salary sunk in the same proportion. For ten years past it has come short of the spirit of the original covenant, about *one hundred* dollars annually. And instead of being as good as the salary of Rev. Mr. Merwin, my predecessor, which I expected, it has been nearly two hundred dollars annually less than his would have been for the same time.

"3. After spending thirteen years of my prime in Washington, with a small family, and as strict a system of economy as I think it proper for a minister to exercise; and after having received important aids from sources on which I have no right to place any further dependence, I still owe several hundred dollars on interest, which I have no means of paying, unless I sell my land; and without my land I have no reasonable prospect of support.

"4. Though I ought to remember, and trust I always shall remember with affection, the kindness of my people in the years 1805 and 1806, during my ill health, yet their actual expense for preaching, during those years, was less than the salary of many of my brethren in the ministry, and less than mine would have been, had it been made good according to the spirit of the original contract.

"In conclusion, I wish to be expressly understood—that I am not under an invitation to remove to any other place; that I have no wish to exchange my people for any other whatever; that I wish them to do nothing but what may be done freely; that I ask nothing as matter of favor, and desire nothing but what is honorable and just."

This statement soon became the subject of general conversation, and produced some excitement and unkind feeling. An effort was made by some of Mr. Porter's friends, at a meeting of the society holden very soon afterwards, to raise his salary to a sum corresponding with the intent of the original agreement. The effort however failed. This occasioned the following communication, addressed to the church, dated Nov. 13, 1809.

"My Christian Brethren,

"For thirteen years we have lived together in harmony. The happy union which has subsisted betwixt

us, has of late been interrupted in a manner which is remarkable, and to a degree, which I fear is incurable. As the subject involves the interests of religion, the honor of the ministry, and the happiness of yourselves and families, I am bound to submit the following plain statement of facts, for your candid consideration. Before I was a preacher, I lived in the family of Rev. Noah Merwin. After his death, it pleased Providence to order, that I should be invited to become his successor in the ministry. I had supposed that his salary, though not large, was a competent support for a family. It was called an *hundred pounds*, and *wood*. The same sum was offered me, excepting it was stated in money instead of produce, and fifty dollars instead of wood, which I was told would be as good for me, and more convenient for the society. As there was then an advance on provisions, owing to the state of the world, an addition was made to my settlement by subscription, as an equivalent for that sacrifice on my part, which was considered, on all hands, as *temporary*. No one supposed that I was to make a permanent sacrifice of one *fourth* or one *third* of my salary, from the spirit of the original agreement. If I had considered this as a probable event, I should have looked forward to the generosity and justice of this people for my remedy, or I should certainly have refused your call. Within two or three years after my settlement, I perceived that my salary was likely to prove essentially deficient. I endeavored to practise a careful economy in my house, and to take the best advantage of my land. In this, I found difficulty. Every day's work began to cost me from twenty-five to fifty, and finally, in many instances, one hundred per cent more than I expected. With some of my mechanic bills, the case was the same. My peace and my usefulness forbade me to contend with individuals on this subject. I had lived long enough to see the

extreme delicacy of money transactions betwixt a minister and his people. I consulted with judicious friends on the expediency of selling my land. This they advised me to defer, as it was plain that I could not live without my land, or an increase of salary.

"From time to time, I have stated my circumstances and my feelings to individuals in this place. In the mean time, I have perceived that the salaries of my brethren, in some of the neighboring societies, which were the same as my own, have been considerably advanced. I have hoped my people would see all these things, and that I should be spared the pain of being first to move a consideration of my own case. Early in the present year, I conversed with a few individuals more seriously than heretofore, on this subject. In the spring, I conversed with others. In the summer, I was given to understand that something would probably be done at the annual meeting. Here it rested till the latter part of September, when I again urged upon a few, the necessity of a reasonable attention to this subject, and the probable consequences of its being attended to in an improper manner. On account of the difficulties of the season, I did not insist on the subject being pressed, at present, any further than to know whether the principle was admitted, that something *ought to be done.* This, I supposed, might be determined one time as well as another.

"So soon as the statements I made to individuals,* became matter of public conversation, I was informed that the common impression was against any thing being done. This led me to express my choice that the business should go forward to some regular issue. I have seen its unhappy progress. I have seen and lamented that every circumstance respecting it, has received the most unfa-

* Those contained in the first paper.

vorable construction; and I have been well aware, that so much irritation and ferment, and misrepresentation, could not produce any good effects.

"To conclude this statement, I have only to say to you, brethren, that if you can devise any means to restore *tranquillity* to this society, and afford me a competent support, I shall be happy to remain your minister. I can forget all the wanton and cruel things that have been said, provided I can have reason to think they will be forgotten by you. But I cannot remain here, and see you a divided people—I cannot remain here, and receive a support which is drawn from you with reluctance, and accompanied with your reproaches. I had rather have your friendship than your money. I must insist on it, if any thing is done, that it be done *cheerfully*. If something effectual cannot be done, I presume you will think it reasonable to join with me in calling the Consociation, that our relation may be dissolved."

An unsuccessful effort to raise the salary by *subscription*, followed this communication. In consequence of the communication, however, the society voted to raise the salary to the value contemplated in the original contract, encumbering their vote with the condition, that their pastor might leave, by giving them six months' notice; and that his salary should cease in six months after notice from the society, that they wished his services discontinued. This vote, without very mature consideration, Mr. Porter thought it his duty to accept, hoping that excitement would pass by; that unkind feelings would subside; and that he might continue his labors with a fair prospect of usefulness. His acceptance of the vote he communicated to his people, and informed them that he should dismiss the subject from his thoughts. The excitement was not however, as he hoped, allayed—his

motives were still suspected; his remarks were misconstrued; and feelings were discoverable in the society, the existence of which would obviously be prejudicial to his usefulness. Further reflection convinced him that he had acted injudiciously in acceding to the proposals of his people, and induced him to make the communication which follows.

"To the Church and Society in Washington.

"Fathers and Brethren,

"In the note which I read on the last Sabbath, you were given to understand, that, though I had deliberated on the subject of leaving this place, and had been in a state of painful suspense as to my duty, I should dismiss the subject from my thoughts, at present, and if that should be agreeable to you, let it rest where it is. I had expected that it would thus rest. I had hoped that you would see, in my communication, a spirit not unworthy of a Christian minister. But another week has confirmed all my apprehensions, and left me no room to hesitate in the conclusion, that the foundation of confidence and harmony, which heretofore existed betwixt us, *can never be restored.* With this persuasion, I conceive that nothing but mischief can result from further suspense. I request your attention, therefore, to the following communication.

"When I was set apart to the work of the ministry here, it was with the view of spending my life among you. This has been uniformly, both my wish and my expectation until lately. The circumstances which, within a few months, have interrupted the harmony of our relation, are fresh in our recollection. These circumstances, I have weighed carefully and prayerfully. But, the more I have deliberated on the subject, the more I have become convinced, that my stay here as your minister, cannot pro-

mote your best interests, nor my own usefulness and happiness. This opinion is founded on the following reasons.

"1. It will be recollected, that by your proposition and vote, provision is made for a peaceable separation to take place within six months, whenever it is requested by you or me. This proposition I thought it my duty to accept, because it was my sincere wish to remain here, and because it was manifest that I was reduced to a choice betwixt this and a speedy dismission. On more reflection, I have doubted the correctness of my judgment, though I cannot question the purity of my motives. Though this proposition had been mentioned, it was not possible for me to anticipate that it would be seriously made to me by this society. When it was made, you are sensible I had but a moment for reflection. I rejoiced to see a respite to those painful sensations, which had prevailed in so threatening a manner. The occasion led me to correct false impressions which had been felt, and to express those sentiments of attachment to this people, which I had always sincerely entertained. For a time, I did indulge the hope, that what had taken place in this society might leave me a prospect of continued peace and usefulness. But,

"2. I was soon informed that I had acted under a mistake, by supposing the proportion of voters, in the affirmative, to be larger than it really was.

"3. On a careful review of the whole ground, I could not but fear that the unhappy prejudices which had attended the raising of my salary, and the manner in which it was finally raised, must, according to the common course of human nature, and at no distant period, operate to disturb the tranquillity, and to destroy that confidence which ought to exist betwixt a minister and people.

"4. In the mean time, I have been called to apply

myself more particularly to study than I had lately done; and have found its influence unfavorable to my prospects of enjoying health. My constitution has been impaired by my past labors, so that I fear I should be less useful among you, hereafter, than I might be in another place, or than another minister might be in this place.

"Laying all these things together, it has become my painful duty to inform you, that, with the leave of Providence, my labors among you will cease at the end of six months from this time; or at any earlier period that may be more agreeable to you.

"This decision has been formed, I trust, in the fear of God. It is the result of deep and solemn reflection—a result which has been brought about by an unexpected coincidence of events; and which I have endeavored to consider well, according to its momentous nature and consequences. I have anticipated the reluctance with which I shall leave many friends, who are dear, very dear to my heart, and the pangs which a separation will inflict on their feelings and my own. While I remain with you, you will have my best efforts to promote your interests; and while I live, my sincerest wishes for your happiness. I entreat you to be at peace among yourselves, and I pray that the God of love and peace may be with you."

By desire of several persons, who entertained hope that the breach might yet be healed, and the valuable services of their pastor retained, another meeting of the society was called. Mr. Porter was informed previously to this meeting, that though the society generally manifested a willingness to grant what he would deem a competent salary, and chose to remove the condition appended to their former vote, of which he had already taken advantage, and by which it was obvious he was much less likely to suffer than they; yet a respectable minority would insist

that the salary should cease with actual service. From this he dissented, not so much from a fear of personal disadvantage, as from principle. Being still convinced that the harmony indispensable to his usefulness could not be restored, he submitted to the meeting a brief review of the circumstances which had transpired, and concluded with the address which follows:—

"To many of you, gentlemen, my sincerest acknowledgments are due for the motives which gave rise to the meeting of this day. But being well assured that there cannot be that entire unanimity and cordiality in your proceedings, which the nature of the case renders indispensable, I cannot consent that your peace should be hazarded, and my own feelings put to a new trial on the subject. I beg you will receive this communication in the same frank and friendly spirit with which it is made. I am satisfied it is the will of Providence that we should separate. Let us separate in love and peace. It is my wish that no measures whatever may be taken, with the expectation of my remaining here; but that your attention should be turned like a band of brethren, to the settlement of another minister. Should you adopt this course, the money you have been pleased to add to my salary, is at your disposal to employ a candidate, if that should be your pleasure. It is my earnest prayer, that brotherly love may continue among you. In the faith and fellowship of the gospel, I am yours,

"E. Porter."

In pursuance of this determination, letters missive were issued for the purpose of convening an ecclesiastical council, to whose decision the proposed separation should be referred. Just previous to the meeting of the council, Mr. Porter received an animated and cheering address

from the young men of his charge, which, as it is alike creditable to themselves and their pastor, is in substance subjoined.

"The young people of Washington, animated with the highest sentiments of love and attachment to their pastor, respectfully request leave to present this address, as an expression of their esteem and friendship to him—a friendship, which thirteen years' acquaintance has only served to strengthen and increase. Bearing in mind the valuable instructions we have received, and the virtuous example so long exhibited for our imitation, too deep an impression is made on our hearts to be easily effaced. We have beheld, with the greatest reverence, the tender and anxious solicitude which our minister has ever manifested, to promote our present and future happiness. For that paternal affection and watchfulness for the eternal welfare of our souls, our hearts overflow with gratitude which language is too feeble to express.

"The young people are truly sensible of the extraordinary privileges they have enjoyed, while under the special charge of their present pastor. The instructions they have received, have in a peculiar manner endeared him to them, and we trust they will not soon be forgotten.

"While we thus cheerfully pay our tribute of respect, and our grateful acknowledgments to our beloved pastor for the invaluable services he has rendered us, may we not be permitted to cherish the hope that they may still be continued.

"We have beheld with the greatest pleasure, the happy union which has so long subsisted between us; and we sincerely regret that this union is apparently on the verge of dissolution. An event so distressing to our society, must in a particular manner, be felt by us who have so long

been peculiarly favored with his instructions. We entertain the pleasing hope that Mr. Porter will approve the measures adopted to preserve the continuance of this union. Should this be the happy consequence, the highest wishes of the rising generation will be realized. To them, nothing is more desirable; and we flatter ourselves that the same unanimity and harmony which have hitherto subsisted, will still prevail. As the difficulty that has arisen between Mr. Porter and the society, has been respecting his salary, and as some of our fathers and friends have wished a condition annexed thereto, we, their sons, (paying due deference to their judgment,) wish no such thing. We are willing to give our pastor an honorable support, not clogged with any conditions. And if Providence should lengthen out his life beyond his usefulness here as a preacher, we are willing to give in the evening of his life, that support which a grateful people will ever be willing to give a beloved minister.

"But if Providence in wisdom should otherwise determine, and a separation between us and our pastor be deemed indispensable, he will still retain our best wishes for his prosperity and happiness, united with our fervent prayer for his extensive usefulness in what part soever of the vineyard of our Lord he may be placed."

This address, which Mr. Porter was assured was unanimously approved by the young men of his charge, served very much to allay his apprehensions respecting the possibility of his continued usefulness among his people. Those for whose conversion and improvement he had labored with the most unwearied solicitude, and on whose friendship and co-operation his future usefulness would most depend, it was evident continued to entertain a strong attachment to him as a man, and a decided preference for him as a minister. His determination, which he had considered final, wavered,

He thought it possible he had yet a work to do in Washington. The council, which was composed of six pastors and delegates from the neighboring churches, met April 25, 1810, and as the result of their deliberations, advised that the relation between Mr. Porter and his people should be continued. "We advise," they added, "both minister and people to forgive and forget past occurrences, which have tended to impair the unusual harmony heretofore existing between them; and that they unitedly seek the things that make for peace, Christian love, and mutual edification. Permit us to assure you, that our prayers will ascend to heaven for you. Feeling the utmost confidence in the fidelity of your minister, and his ardent zeal for your good, we hope and trust that by his prudent and faithful efforts, he may with the blessing of God be the instrument of unspeakable good. Finally, brethren, we commend you to the grace of God. Farewell; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Amen."

Previous to the meeting of the council, the rumor having gone abroad that Mr. Porter was about to leave his charge, several applications were made for his services. Strangers in some instances made it convenient to spend the Sabbath in Washington, and manifested a solicitude to hear him preach, which clearly indicated to his people, that his talents and services as a minister, however they might regard them, were highly estimated by others. Among the applications he received, was one bearing date the same day as the meeting of the council, from the First church in New Haven, then vacant, in consequence of the removal of Rev. Moses Stuart to the theological seminary at Andover. Before the date of this application, the desire had been repeatedly expressed to Mr. Porter by members of that church, and by others particularly interested in its prosperity, that, by procuring a dismission from

Washington he would place himself in a situation to receive a formal invitation to New Haven; the feelings of that church at the time, and indeed his own principles about removal, forbidding the presentation of a call to another parish while he retained a pastoral charge. To a communication from a highly esteemed friend, urging his dismission from Washington, and his removal to New Haven, on the ground that the interests of Zion demanded it, he thus replied:—"The subject to which you call my attention, I have taken into serious consideration. It has *many bearings*, as it concerns myself, and especially as it involves interests which I ought to hold more dear than my own. The favorable opinion which you have happened to form of me, must not be allowed to govern my decision in a case, on which so much depends. There are *two sides* to this question, which I am called to consider, in the fear of God. It is too delicate to admit of advice, and too momentous to be determined without. All I can say to you now is, if an immediate result is expected, it cannot be such as you wish. It has of late been my prevailing opinion that Providence designs my removal,—in this however, I am not yet perfectly decided; and should I become so, such removal must be the work of *months*, not of a day or week."

The address of the young men had somewhat predisposed Mr. Porter to concur in the result of the council; and from that time he seems to have been confirmed in the conclusion, that the Lord designed his continuance at Washington. Under this impression, he engaged anew with his wonted zeal in the performance of pastoral labors. It appears indeed, that his people to a very desirable extent, were disposed, in accordance with the judicious advice of the council, "to forgive and forget past occurrences," and in union with their pastor, "to seek the things which make for peace, Christian love, and mutual

edification." He was not, however, permitted to continue his labors uninterrupted by applications from abroad. That from New Haven continued to be urged. By many of his friends in whose judgment he greatly confided, among whom were Dr. Dwight, and others associated with him in the government of Yale college, it was believed to be his duty under existing circumstances, to obtain a dismission, solely for the purpose of removing to New Haven. Even after his appointment at Andover, when a meeting of the consociation was contemplated for the dissolution of his pastoral relation, he was urged to receive a dismission in such form, that he might consistently settle at New Haven. So long, however, as he had doubts respecting his duty, the solicitations of friends were expended upon him in vain.

It may be proper here to note, that during the year 1809, Mr. Porter was elected a member of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences.

In May, 1810, he preached the annual sermon before the Connecticut Missionary Society; and in August following, was elected a trustee of the same body.

In the early part of 1811, he undertook, with several other gentlemen, at the request of the Connecticut Bible Society, a special agency for the purpose of ascertaining the number of families in the State destitute of the sacred Scriptures. In May of this year, he attended the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church at Philadelphia, as a delegate from the General Association of Connecticut. In July, he received a communication acquainting him that the Consistory of the Dutch church in Albany, had fixed on him as their future pastor, and were very desirous of securing his services. This communication was followed by an oral application from a committee of the church. In August, he received from

Gov. Griswold the following complimental request to prepare an election sermon.

"Sir,

"The usage of this State has devolved on the Governor the duty of requesting two gentlemen of your profession to prepare sermons to be delivered before the General Assembly, at the Election in May. Mr. Welch, of Mansfield, was last year requested by Gov. Treadwell to deliver the sermon, in case Mr. Stebbins, who had been previously appointed, should be prevented from officiating. He has of course been requested to prepare himself for the next election, and I trust will not object to performing the duty. In making a selection myself, in case Mr. Welch should disappoint our wishes, I have really met with no difficulty. The sermon which I had the pleasure of hearing in May, 1810, and which you delivered before the Missionary Society, satisfied me that the public had further claims on your talents, and I take the liberty at this time of making one of those claims, and request that you will be so good as to prepare and deliver the sermon at the next election, provided Mr. Welch should be prevented. You must allow me to add, that I cannot accept an ordinary excuse. The honor of the State is concerned in a proper selection, and I feel no small interest in making a choice which shall be honorable to myself.

"With great respect, I have the honor to be your obedient and very humble servant,

"Roger Griswold.

"Rev. Mr. Porter."

Compliance with this request, Mr. Porter felt it his duty, on account of his state of health, to decline.

CHAPTER IV.

Appointment at Andover—Reasons for and against accepting—Communication to his church and society—Meeting of consociation—Dissolution of pastoral relation—Answer to trustees—Inauguration.

About this time the guardians of the Theological Seminary at Andover were called to fill the Professorship of Pulpit Eloquence in that Institution, left vacant by the resignation of Rev. Dr. Griffin. With entire unanimity both the Trustees and Visitors concurred in the election of Mr. Porter. When this appointment, which bears date Sept. 24, 1811, was announced to Mr. Porter, his state of health seemed to forbid its acceptance; yet, at the same time to admonish him, that he could not reasonably hope much longer to discharge, as formerly, pastoral duties. By many of his friends, his state of health, especially his state of lungs which rendered public speaking irksome, was urged as a strong reason in favor of his acceptance. He felt, on the other hand, that with a constitution impaired by previous labor, and undermined by disease, he could not expect so successfully to pursue study as to supply deficiencies, and make the attainments indispensable to a useful and honorable discharge of official duty in the station to which he was called. To this was added the apprehension that through

the partiality of friends his talents had been overrated, and that in undertaking the proposed duties, he might do religion disservice and himself discredit. Few men, it is believed, contemplate the acceptance of a public station with more unfeigned diffidence and solicitude. His deliberation and caution are manifest from the following paper, evidently drawn up for his own use at the time. The document serves also to exhibit his mode of examining questions of moment.

"An important question to be decided—'*Shall I remain at Washington?*'"

Motives for the affirmative.	*Motives for the negative.*
1. God has given me the charge of this church and people. He has assigned me a good work, a great work;—work sufficient to employ the whole time and strength of *three* such ministers as myself.	1. The Theological Seminary is an object of unquestionable and high importance. Its design is to raise up ministers for the church of God. Its constitution and statutes are evidently the result of wisdom and piety; and the unparalleled liberality of wealthy individuals for its support, increases the evidence that it is owned of God.
2. The duties to which I am called at Andover, might be performed better by some other man than by me: and probably by some other man who has not the charge of a people.	2. I am called to take part as an instructor in this Seminary, by men of established reputation for judgment and piety: men whose opinion on any other subject, I should certainly deem worthy of more regard than my own.
3. A removal would be attended with immense and irreparable sacrifices as to my family and ministerial connections.	3. Such are the collisions of sentiment and local prejudice unhappily prevalent in Massachusetts, and in so many ways do these bear upon this infant institution, that a refusal of my call might be attended with many evil consequences.
4. My habits are so settled at the age of thirty-nine, that they would not easily conform to a new situation.	4. My prospects of happiness and usefulness here are impaired by the events of 1809 and '10. My salary was raised by *constraint* rather than by *conviction*

	and *choice:* things were said and done by individuals, which can never be retracted: impressions were made on my feelings, which can never be effaced: the fire which then raged so terribly, though smothered, is not extinguished.
5. I have much reason to question my competence to the new task assigned me: and a failure in that would be more probable, and be attended with worse consequences to myself and the great interests of religion, than an equal failure in my present duties. This is the only professorship in the institution which is subjected to popular scrutiny: and public approbation in this office, can hardly be expected, consistently with a proper discharge of its duties.	5. There is reason to believe that another minister might be obtained here, who could do more ministerial service than I can do; as the stated labors of the pastoral office are manifestly too great for my constitution.
6. This people might experience difficulty in procuring another pastor.	6. Though a successor should prove no more active or faithful than I have been, he might probably be more useful than I could be in future, especially to the rising generation.
7. A removal would be attended with much perplexity, and probably with considerable sacrifice as to property.	7. The principles on which I entered the ministry, forbid me to place personal sacrifices in competition with duty.

While pondering the question of his removal, Mr. Porter received numerous letters from the professors already residing at Andover, and other distinguished clergymen, expressing confidence in his fitness for the station to which he was called, and a conviction that the interests of Zion demanded his acceptance. Having become convinced that it would be his duty to remove to Andover, if the consociation of which he was a member should concur with him in opinion, he made the communication to his church and society, which is subjoined.

"To the members of the First Church and Society in Washington.

"*Washington, Nov.* 4, 1811.

"Fathers and Brethren,

"The gentlemen who superintend the interests of the Theological Seminary at Andover, have seen fit to appoint me a Professor in that institution. The sole design of the above seminary is to educate pious young men for the work of the Christian ministry. It consists of about fifty students; a considerable proportion of whom, as well as all the professors, are supported by the pious liberality of a few individuals. I am satisfied that this institution is owned of God, and promises important usefulness to his church. I am satisfied that its instructors must themselves be ministers, possessed of that experience which can be acquired only by an actual performance of the duties of the pastoral office.

"Whether it is, or is not best that I should remove to that institution, now becomes a subject of interesting inquiry.

"The ministry is my chosen employment. My heart and my life are devoted to it. In the charge of this people, God has assigned me a great and good work: a work more than sufficient to employ the whole time and strength of one man: a work indeed, which has proved too arduous for my constitution.

"You perceive then, brethren, that I am placed in solemn circumstances. The question before me, deeply involves my own personal interests, and the more important interests of this people, and of religion generally. There are but two ways, in which this question can come to an issue: it must be decided either by *me* or by *others*. As to the first:—probably I have no *right*, and certainly I have no *disposition* to decide it myself. As to the second:—I conceive the consociation to be the proper judges in the

case. They gave me the charge of this people. To them I hold myself accountable. In their wisdom I have entire confidence. They are known throughout New England, as a dignified and enlightened ecclesiastical body. Your interests and mine are one with theirs.

"I invite you then, brethren, to unite with me in a friendly reference of this subject to their decision. Thus doing, if we are still to live together, we may live together in love: if we are to part, we may part in love.

"To the many motives which should induce us to look to consociation for direction, divine Providence has added another, in the recent change of my health. Though it becomes us to feel no solicitude on this subject, it is my duty to say frankly, that I have no expectation of being able to serve you as a minister for some time to come. Under all circumstances, I do rely upon it, that from a regard to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, from a prudent care of your *own* best interests, and from friendship to me, you will consent to a call of consociation, and will authorize a committee to agree with me as to the time and manner of convening that body. Any other course of proceeding will give to this business the aspect of a *religious controversy;* which would be equally painful, I am sure, to you and to me.

"With the best wishes for the spiritual and temporal prosperity of this people, and wishing you the divine guidance and benediction, I am,

"Your affectionate Pastor.

"N. B. 1. I have fixed no time when I would wish consociation to meet. Perhaps in the month of December.

"2. I shall expect that meeting to be at my expense, if such should be the wish of the society."

Mr. Porter's people having consented to refer the question of his removal to the consociation, that body was

convened Dec. 18, 1811, and with great unanimity dissolved his pastoral relation. The next day he communicated to the trustees, through their president, his answer.

"*Washington, Dec.* 19, 1811.

"Rev. Sir,

"The Consociation gave a decision yesterday, in favor of my removal to Andover, as soon as my health and other circumstances will permit. I view this as the decision of Providence which I am required to obey. In every step of the process which has produced this conclusion, I have proceeded with trembling. I have anticipated the pangs which await me, in separating from a circle of friends whom I love most tenderly. I have felt the difficulty with which habits so settled as mine can be conformed to new relations and new duties. I have felt and still feel a deep conviction of my own incompetence to fill a station so arduous and responsible, as that which is assigned me. The solicitude excited by other considerations, has been increased by the state of my health, which there is reason to fear will prove inadequate to the labors required.

"But I commit myself to God, relying upon his aid, and upon the candor, the counsel, and prayers of the trustees, and of the Christian brethren with whom I am to be associated. It will, however, be expressly understood that I must have time to study the things which I am to teach; that I must be my own judge, how much application to business my constitution will bear; and that if the interests of the institution should be found to suffer through my lack of health or other qualifications, I shall cheerfully relinquish the office whenever the trustees may think it necessary. Should these views correspond with those of the gentlemen who superintend the interests of the institution, I do hereby accept the invitation to become one of its professors. In doing this, I rest assured that every

proper indulgence will be given to my infirmities, as to one who claims no other reputation than that of a plain man of honest intentions.

"With sentiments of great respect,

"I am, Rev. Sir, yours &c.

"E. PORTER.

"Rev. ELIPHALET PEARSON, LL. D.,
President of the Board, &c."

As the interests of the institution were suffering from the vacancy in the department of Pulpit Eloquence,* it was the earnest wish of the trustees, in which the professors then connected with the seminary participated, that Mr. Porter should be inaugurated, and enter on his official duties without delay. Being apprised, however, of his apprehensions that the excitement and fatigue of removal, and of entering a new sphere of action during the inclemency of winter, might prove seriously prejudicial to his health, they kindly waived their claims, and consented to such delay as he might deem expedient. Through their president, the trustees remark—"Much as we wish to see you, and enjoy your labors here, we are *primarily* anxious for your *health*, and request you in no way to expose yourself to injury during the *cold of winter*. Considering the delicate state of your lungs, you ought to run no hazard of doing yourself a lasting injury, for the sake of a few weeks' partial duty." Early in March, 1812, he made his first visit to the sacred seminary, which was to become the object of his future solicitude and prayers; and which to his latest consciousness, ceased not to engage his undivided affection. The interval between his arrival at Andover, and his induction into office, which took place

* By Mr. Porter's desire the title of his professorship was changed from Pulpit Eloquence to Sacred Rhetoric: the former title being too imposing to accord with his feelings.

on the first day of April, was employed in making preparation for the removal of his family; in surveying his future field of labor, and in becoming acquainted with the venerable founders of the institution, who, with paternal solicitude, had watched over its rising interests; had anticipated, and with unexampled munificence provided for its numerous wants. Of the founders of the institution, there were then living Samuel Abbot, Madam Phillips, John Phillips, Moses Brown, and William Bartlet, Esq., by the last of whom the professorship, of which Dr. Porter was the incumbent, was founded; and from whom it receives its name. Of these, only the last named gentleman survives, to witness the extended usefulness of the beloved seminary he has so kindly fostered; himself an object of grateful and affectionate remembrance, by the many who have enjoyed the facilities for theological instruction furnished by his enlarged liberality. At Mr. Porter's inauguration, the Rev. Dr. Holmes made the introductory prayer, and preached a sermon; Rev. Dr. Dana of Newburyport, made the inaugurating prayer; the Rev. Dr. Pearson, president of the board of trustees read the appropriate parts of the statutes of the founders. He also read the creed which was repeated by the professor elect; and Rev. Dr. Spring made the concluding prayer. An address which had been expected from Mr. Porter, was omitted on account of his delicate health. He entered at once on the discharge of official duty, which he continued till the spring vacation. In June he removed his family to Andover.

CHAPTER V.

Enters on his labors—Receives degree of D. D.—Doubts about accepting it—Elected President of University of Vermont—Answer—Finds the northern winter unfavorable to his health—Seeks a southern climate—Effect on health—Employment while absent—Returning, attends Gen. Assembly of Pres. Church—Appointed Prof. of Divinity in Yale College—Answer.

The hopes which Professor Porter and his friends had fondly entertained respecting the favorable influence of a change of labors on his health, were not realized. He did, indeed, gain relief from public speaking, which, for some months previous, had been peculiarly laborious and painful. The disappointment of his hopes arose, in part, from the miscellaneous character of his duties, which required constant attention; and in part, from intense application to study, to which he felt constrained, by a due regard to the character of the Seminary, to the interests of Zion, to the improvement of his pupils, and to his own reputation, to devote every moment, not pre-occupied by other official engagements. In fact, his history, from his removal to Andover to the close of his life, is the history of an invalid.

During the years 1812—1814, he continued his labors with only occasional, and in no instance very protracted interruptions, on account of ill health.

In August, 1814, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, was conferred upon him by Dartmouth college; —a title, it would seem, which he had some scruples about receiving. It is not known that these were communicated to any one, at the time; but it is evident from the following paper, that the subject occasioned him some solicitude.

"QUESTION. *Is it right for Christians, especially Christian preachers, to receive honorary titles?*"

I. WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES?

They mention four sorts of titles—

1. Civil and military, as king, nobleman, ruler, (*βασιλικός, αρχων*), captain, &c.

2. Ecclesiastical or spiritual simply, as prophet, preacher, apostle, teacher, (*διδάσκαλος*). All these, if I mistake not, are used appropriately.

3. Appellations of civility, as Master, Sir, Lord, (*Κύριος, Dominus*). Master commonly denotes authority, "Servants, obey your (*κυρίοις*)." Eph. vi. 5. "Be not many (*διδάσκαλοι*)." James iii. 1. ("*Επιστάτα!*) we perish." Luke viii. 24. (*Κύριος*), Sir, Lord—is applied to an earthly father, "I go, Sir;"—to Christ as a common appellation, by the woman of Samaria;—to Christ as a divine title, "Lord, Lord, open unto us."

It is clear that the *three* first classes of titles, or such as are merely official, or appellations of common civility, are not directly condemned in the Bible. They have been usual, and deemed necessary in all ages and countries. Yet, it is not a little curious, that the same word (*κύριος*) should be applied in the Scriptures indifferently to Jehovah, to an earthly prince, to a master of a family, and even to one neighbor by another.

To what a pitch of impiety have reptile kings been "stuck o'er with titles"—borrowed from those of the infinite God!

"Men homage pay to men,
Of clay to clay; of guilt to guilt, and turn their backs on God—
Thoughtless beneath whose awful eye they bow!"

4. Titles of respect, as Rabbi, (Chaldaic.) These seem to have been applied indefinitely to civil, military, or ecclesiastical office. Nebuzaradan was Rabbi of the guards. Ashpenaz was Rabbi of the eunuchs; and Daniel Rabbi of the interpreters.

The 4th class of titles were those coveted by the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time. They loved chief seats and greetings in the market; and to be called of men, *Rabbi*. "But be not *ye* called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

The term Rabbi, in more modern times, seems to have been limited to ecclesiastical office, and conferred by vote of those who possessed it before.

On this passage it is said,

It forbids preachers to receive honorary titles; because Rabbi was an ecclesiastical title in Christ's time.

Ans. 1. Some have replied,—Christ spake this to "the *multitude* and to *his disciples*." These men were not preachers, nor candidates for ecclesiastical dignity. An exhortation to a modern, mixed assembly, "*Be not called D. D.*," would be unintelligible.

2. These Rabbis claimed to be acknowledged as infallible interpreters of God's will, and dictators of others' faith. In this, Christians must not be like them.

3. It was not their crime to be greeted in the market, or addressed respectfully by others, but they *loved* sounding titles; *sought* them; *claimed* them. Their vain ostentation was to be shunned by Christians.

4. The spirit of the injunction then is, that Christians, especially Christian preachers, be not vainglorious.

II. What says History?

1. Paul had no doctorate, nor had any of the first preachers of the gospel.

Ans. 1. It is said that Paul had no degree of A. B. or A. M.—and that literary degrees of every sort are modern things.

2. After these honorary degrees began to be given on the continent, some of the first and best men were omitted, as Calvin and others.

2. Luther and others were not omitted.

3. They were not conferred on Baxter, Flavel, etc.

3. English universities have never conferred them on dissenters.

4. This degree was refused by the excellent J. Newton, and, so it is said, by A. Fuller; and probably would have been by President Edwards, had it been conferred.

4. Newton's objection was that he was not a literary man. But it was accepted by Watts, Doddridge, and others in England; by Witherspoon, Hopkins, Bellamy, J. Edwards, Jr., Increase Mather, and others in this country.

III. The tendency is bad.

1. It makes a distinction among men who are equal in office.	1. If it makes any distinction, it is only *literary*, not *official*. But 2. It makes *no* distinction, because it is so often conferred upon boys and blockheads, that it ceases to denote that *real distinction* which personal and official merit establishes.

"The rage for titles on earth, especially in the church, is one striking mark of human *littleness*. The style of the Roman pontiff, '*Your Holiness*'—of the Greek patriarch, '*Your All-Holiness*'—of the Metropolitan, '*Your Beatitude;*' or of the priest, '*Your old age*,' to denote wisdom, especially when applied to young men, are sufficiently ridiculous.

"And the modern title of D. D. is often so conferred as to excite contempt. He that can look at facts in this case, and then be pleased with the application of it to himself, has 'great pride, or little sense.' He that can be tickled with a ring or rattle, has the heart of a child, and not of a minister.

"What then shall a sober man do? If he refuses this title on general principles, because it is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, he charges a long list of such worthies as Watts, &c. with wearing a public mark of pride or folly. If he refuses it on principles that respect himself only, he is liable to be charged with the ostentation of humility; and really needs much prayer and heart-searching to be certain that 'cursed pride' is not at the bottom. Too much noise to get rid of this contemptible honor, 'resembles ocean into tempest wrought, to waft a feather or to drown a fly.' A wise man would not kill a gnat, by a blow that might fracture his leg.

"What shall I do? My official relations involve this question in peculiar difficulties. Lord, direct me."

In March, 1815, Dr. Porter was elected President of the University of Vermont. From communications addressed to him in connection with his appointment, it appears that the institution at that time, was in a broken state. For some years, the attempt on the part of certain

of its trustees, to introduce lax theological sentiments, had created unhappy divisions, and exerted a deleterious influence upon its interests. Several of the trustees who entertained evangelical sentiments, having become satisfied that the college could not under these circumstances become what they desired it should be, had resigned their places; and the remainder of the board, fearing that the institution might expire under their administration, had surrendered it into the hands of the State legislature, in whom the ultimate control of it was vested. Some changes in its statutes were made; several new trustees were elected, and another effort was resolved upon to sustain it. But an application having been made for the use of the college edifice, to accommodate the United States' troops then stationed in the vicinity, it was accepted; the few remaining students were disbanded, and the officers dismissed. On the return of peace, the trustees again determined to place the institution on a permanent footing. With this view, they resolved to elect officers, whose religious sentiments should correspond with those of the patrons of the college generally; and whose influence would warrant the hope of its future prosperity and usefulness. To Dr. Porter, say the letters from which the preceding facts are collected, the eyes of the trustees were turned, and they unanimously concurred in his election to the presidency. This appointment he thought it his duty to decline, for the reasons stated in the subjoined answer to the trustees.

"*The Honorable and Reverend, the Board of Trustees of the University of Vermont.*

"Gentlemen,

"The documents certifying your election of me as President of your University, have been communicated

by the hand of Rev. Mr. Preston. The motives which induced the board to make this election, the history of the establishment, its present circumstances, and its prospects, have been presented to my mind with as much fidelity and ability, on the part of Mr. Preston, as you could desire.

"I thank you, gentlemen, for this public testimony of your confidence in me, as one whom you deem qualified for a station, so arduous and responsible as that which your president must occupy. The question has indeed come with a solemn appeal to my judgment and heart. It is one, on which I have not dared to act without deliberate reflection, and fervent supplication for guidance from *Him*, whose I am, and whom I profess to serve. I have considered my life as sacredly devoted to the Theological Seminary with which I am connected; a seminary which probably ought not to be considered as second in importance to any other in this land. To serve the church in this station, I left an affectionate people and a circle of friends, whom I love most tenderly. To leave this station, (with the duties of which I am just becoming familiar,) and remove to another sphere of action, would be a sacrifice, to which nothing but the most obvious and imperious call of duty would reconcile me. There is also much reason to fear that my health would prove inadequate to the various and difficult duties of the office to which you invite me; especially, as my constitution is little adapted to endure the severity of the northern winter. For these reasons, I am sure you will see the propriety of my declining the important service, to which you have been pleased to appoint me. I do this with the less reluctance, because I have a strong hope that Dr. Austin may be obtained; a full confidence that he is competent to the undertaking; and thus that my decision

in the case will ultimately promote the interests of your establishment.

"With sentiments of great respect,

"I am, gentlemen, yours &c.

"E. PORTER.

"The Honorable and Reverend Trustees of University of Vermont."

During the cold season of 1815–16, Dr. Porter began to be apprehensive that he should not be able to endure another northern winter, and in accordance with the united advice of medical and other friends, he determined to spend the following winter in a milder climate. He embarked at New York, for Charleston, South Carolina, Nov. 6, 1816. After spending a few weeks at Charleston, enjoying hospitalities which made an abiding impression on his heart, he proceeded to Savannah; thence to Augusta, and thence still further into the interior, to Washington and Sparta. Most of the winter he spent in Georgia. While there he was consulted by the trustees of the Georgia University, respecting an election to the presidency of that institution.

The effect of a southern climate upon Dr. Porter was so favorable, that he was able to preach one or more sermons almost every Sabbath during his absence. From his letters, it appears that he found a very interesting field for Christian effort. Alluding to his absence in a private report to the trustees, he remarks;—"Whatever sacrifice to the seminary or to myself has been involved in this suspension of my appropriate duties, as being directed by an all perfect Providence, it has been accompanied, on my part, with ample reasons for submission and gratitude. Besides the benefit derived to my health, from a southern excursion, perhaps no equal portion of my life has furnished more advantages for usefulness to the church."

He assiduously employed himself in promoting the cause of the American Education Society, which had but just commenced its being; and in collecting such facts respecting the moral condition of the southern States, as he hoped successfully to employ, after his return, in awakening an interest in their behalf. Returning, he travelled the whole distance on horseback. Having received information, on his way homeward, that the Massachusetts delegation to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church would fail, unless he would serve in that capacity, he consented to remain at Philadelphia, and attend the session of that body. He reached Andover in June, with health greatly improved.

In February, Dr. Porter was elected Professor of Divinity in Yale college, the intelligence of which appointment he received while yet in Georgia. Perhaps no station could have been offered him, which would have presented so many and so strong inducements to remove from Andover, as were presented in this appointment. Connecticut was his native State; it had been the scene of his labors and enjoyments as a pastor; and he felt most ardent attachment to its institutions and its people. Accepting the appointment, he would still continue in his chosen employment, with flattering prospects of usefulness. He would be called, moreover, to co-operate with a circle of Christian brethren, whose characters he had long known; in whom he reposed entire confidence; and to some of whom, he had for years been attached by personal friendship. Yet strong as were the inducements to remove, he felt that paramount obligations bound him to the station he then occupied. His answer, which shows how deep an impression the call made upon his heart, and what were his reasons for declining it, is presented to the reader.

"*To the Reverend and Honorable, the Trustees of Yale College.*

"Gentlemen,

"While in Georgia, I was officially informed, that you had appointed me Professor of Divinity in Yale college. The considerations by which my views of duty, relative to this important subject, were to be determined, were laid before me by your committee, on my return, the first week in June.

"The importance of Yale college to the interests of learning and religion; its pre-eminent claims to public regard, for the benefits it has conferred on the church and on the world; the sore bereavement it has sustained in the death of its late illustrious head; the high respect which I entertain for those gentlemen of your board, with whom I have the honor to be acquainted; and my entire confidence in your excellent president elect and professors, are considerations which have conspired to render this subject deeply interesting. I might add that a removal to New Haven would be especially pleasant, as it would gratify feelings of immutable attachment to my native State, and would bring me again into connection with a circle of ministers, and personal friends, whom I shall always love most tenderly.

"But gentlemen, there are two reasons why I cannot view it as my duty to accept this appointment.

"The first is, that the labor of *stated preaching*, especially in a station of such responsibility as that to which you call me, is one to which my health is inadequate. I should probably sink under the efforts which would be requisite in any tolerable measure to fulfil my own wishes or the expectations of the public.

"The second reason is, that so far as I have any capacity to be useful to the church, the business of my present office, is perhaps as well adapted to my constitution

as any in which I could engage; and the difficulty of filling my place here, would, in the opinion of all who are concerned in this seminary, be at least as great as that of filling the vacant office at Yale. I am to remember too, that Providence has placed me *here*, and to justify a removal, there must be such a decisive preponderance of motives in favor of the measure, as I cannot perceive to exist in the present case.

"With assurances, that the testimony of confidence in me, which you have been pleased to express, will always be among the most grateful recollections of my life, and that I shall never cease to pray for the prosperity of your beloved college,

"I am, gentlemen, very respectfully yours &c.

"E. PORTER.

"*Andover, July* 17, 1817."

CHAPTER VI.

Illness—Consulted respecting presidency of Hamilton and Middlebury colleges—Appointed President of University of Georgia—Answer—Consulted respecting pastorship of Presbyterian church in Columbia, S. C.—Voyage to Charleston—Journal—Efforts to raise funds for indigent students—Meets President Brown—Casualty—Return to Andover—Consulted respecting presidency of South Carolina college.

VERY soon after his return, he visited by request a sick person in a remote part of Andover, and in consequence of exposure while performing this service, had a severe attack of pleurisy; a disorder of which he was ever after a frequent subject. The period which elapsed between his recovery from this illness, and the winter of 1819–20, he spent in Andover, diligently and happily engaged in the duties of his department, visiting occasionally in vacations the springs at Saratoga, from whose waters he frequently derived much benefit. He was not however permitted to continue his labors without repeated solicitations to accept other places of high responsibility. In July, 1817, he received a communication, the object of which was to ascertain whether if elected President of Hamilton college, as successor to Rev. Dr. Backus, deceased, there would be any prospect of his accepting the office. And in September of the same year he was officially offered the presidency of Middlebury college; the corporation of that

institution having delegated one of their number to consult him respecting the probability of his acceptance, previous to a formal election.

In November 1818, he was chosen President of the University of Georgia. That the literary and religious community of that State had become deeply interested in him, and entertained a high respect for his character, is evident from the entire unanimity which characterised this appointment; and from the numerous and urgent letters from men of the first respectability and influence, which accompanied or followed the announcement of his election. His answer to the trustees will best show how he regarded the appointment, and his reasons for declining it. In addition to the motives which urged his acceptance, mentioned in this document, were a noble spirit of liberality manifest in the proposals respecting his removal and subsequent support; and the fact that about that time an increased interest in the education of youth was awakened in that community,—that men of intelligence especially were uniting in vigorous effort to furnish among themselves adequate means of literary and religious instruction.

"*To the Senatus Academicus, and the Board of Trustees, of the University of Georgia.*

"Gentlemen,

"The official documents, announcing my appointment to the Presidency of your University were duly received. Permit me to return my sincere acknowledgments for this testimony of your friendly regard, and for the very handsome manner in which it is expressed. In forming my judgment on a subject of so much magnitude, as connected with the general interests of religion and learning, and so deeply involving my personal happiness, and that of my family, some delay was unavoidable.

"Several considerations have urged my acceptance of

this invitation. In the early endowment provided for your university, I have perceived an encouraging pledge of that public patronage, which is so essential to its prosperity. The aid which your President may probably render, in forming the literary institutions of a State rapidly advancing in wealth, inhabited by a people generous and enterprising, and destined to hold a distinguished rank in this great country, attaches a high importance, in my estimation, to the office which you have been pleased to confer on me. Your genial climate, too, would afford a refuge from the northern winter, peculiarly favorable to my health.

"But, gentlemen, after mature reflection on this interesting subject, I think it my duty to decline the station to which you invite me. I have considered my life as sacredly devoted to the Theological Seminary with which I am connected, and to serve the interests of which, I left an affectionate people, and a circle of beloved friends in Connecticut. The elevated objects for which this seminary was established, and the ample means with which it is furnished for the promotion of these objects, induce me to believe, that, so far as I have any capacity for usefulness, it may be more advantageously employed in my present station, than in any other to which I could remove. There is one more consideration, which of itself, perhaps ought to be decisive in this case; I mean the special relation which I sustain to a distinguished benefactor of this seminary, whose liberality towards it has scarcely any parallel in modern times. These views of the subject, especially the last, which will be readily appreciated by gentlemen of enlarged and honorable feelings, have presented an insurmountable obstacle to my removal.

"Allow me to add gentlemen, that I shall cherish a grateful recollection of your partial regard to me, and I

shall rejoice in any service, however small, which it may be in my power to render the literary institution of which you are the guardians.

"I am, gentlemen, yours, with sentiments of great respect, E. PORTER."

A few months previous to the invitation from the Georgia university, the committee of the Presbyterian church, in Columbia, S. C., appointed to procure a pastor, being aware that Dr. Porter's constitution but ill sustained a northern winter, and supposing that he might on that account prefer a southern residence, expressed their desire that he would consent to receive a call from that church.

During the autumn of 1819, he and his friends were apprehensive that a change of climate for the winter might again be indispensable. Unwilling to suspend his labors, however, unless compelled to do it, he continued them with occasional interruptions until February, when it became obvious that prudence demanded rest, and resort to a milder atmosphere. He embarked at Newburyport, Feb. 18, 1820, for Charleston, "having received," to use his own language, "every expression of paternal kindness," from his venerable friend and patron, Mr. Bartlet. The vessel did not arrive at Charleston till the 20th of March; the passage having been not only unusually protracted on account of "continual head winds," but unpleasant on account of "heavy breezes, and frequent thunder squalls." The voyage was, on the whole, favorable to his health. A few extracts from a very brief journal of this voyage, will interest the reader.

"During this passage, several things which have long been familiar to me, impressed my mind with increased interest.

"1. The *power* of *habit.*

"This appeared in the capacity of the seamen to walk the deck steadily during the rolling and pitching of the ship; in the skill with which they climbed ropes, and mounted to the top-yards and maintained their hold there to reef and unreef the sails, during a violent gale, in which they were swung from side to side, perhaps twenty feet in a second, with the rolling of the ship; while not one landsman in ten, if placed there, would keep his hold a second.

"Nothing in my experience compares at all to the motions of a ship, except those of land carriages. When one of these vehicles, by any sudden declivity or violence is thrown upon one side, so as greatly to change the angle of its axis with the plane of the horizon, the apprehension of upsetting inclines one instinctively to throw his weight toward the elevated side. This same motion on board a rocking ship, though so natural to a landsman that he will certainly adopt it on first going to sea, is needless, and to seamen appears ridiculous. Now, considering the contrast betwixt the feelings of a mariner, and mine, in a gale at sea, and this contrast resulting from the mere force of habit; it becomes a solemn question, how far even my religious opinions, and sensibilities, and associations, may be influenced by this invisible, but powerful principle,—habit.

"2. The influence of men's *interest* on their *opinions.*

"Our sixteen days of head winds made us all *weather prophets.* And so it happened that we were generally agreed in construing the prognostics of each day in our own favor, while the fact almost as constantly turned out against us. When we spoke the master of a vessel and inquired his opinion as to the probable course of the wind, I could pretty accurately anticipate his answer if I knew what point of compass he wished himself to steer. In the

present case, the mistake was almost invariably harmless; but the same principle may lead to mistakes in opinion, fraught with infinite mischief. Nothing indeed can be more obvious than that in the most important of all concerns, our religious belief, the temper of the heart guards the avenues to the judgment, and modifies the evidence on which its decisions are formed. An impartial result can hardly be expected where passion or interest stands by, and sets her invisible foot on whichever side of the balance she pleases.

"3. The utility of *comparison* and *contrast*, to our intellectual operations and enjoyments.

"On the turnpike, the traveller notes his progress by mile-stones. The savage in the forest is guided by marks on the trees, and exhilarated by seeing the rock, or mountain, or morass, or river to which he is accustomed. But on the ocean, all is one wide, unvarying, unmeaning uniformity. We accommodate our sails and helm to changing winds;—but the 'parted wave' retains 'no furrow from the keel.' We struggle against opposing gales and currents; we cross our own track twenty times without perceiving it, till at the end of a week, the sun breaks from the clouds, and shows us by the aid of a quadrant, that we are farther from our port, than when the week began.

"To the youthful mind, the progress of life is marked by the novelty and contrast of its varied scenes, and a year is a long period. But in more advanced age this variety to most men is succeeded by a dull uniformity, time flies, and eternity approaches unperceived, and death closes the scene in an unexpected moment.

"4. The spiritual state of men must be very much affected by professional pursuits and circumstances.

"During my passage to Carolina, there were very few days, (the Sabbaths not excepted) in which the seamen

were not constantly employed, or liable at any moment to be called upon, in managing the ship. Of course reading the Scriptures and secret prayer, must be attended with much irregularity, even by a *pious* sailor; and I presume that a vigorous piety is never maintained without *systematic* attention to these duties. The habits of seamen are therefore formed in circumstances extremely unfavorable to religious meditation; of necessity, they are generally without Christian teachers, without stated public worship, without opportunity to read; and therefore of choice, without religious books and retirement.

"Besides, the great fatigue and exposure to which they are occasionally called, tempt them to intoxicating drink to a degree which benumbs their moral sensibilities, and 'sears their consciences' with a corrosive more fatal than that of a 'hot iron.'

"These circumstances furnish a great contrast to the condition of one, trained up in the bosom of Christian society, and accustomed to all the restraints and privileges of a Christian family. Comparatively we may say he can hardly avoid religious impressions; and though we cannot estimate probabilities with exactness, in such a case, he is far more likely to be saved than if he had been destined to navigate the ocean. But if he perishes, his guilt must be beyond all computation aggravated.

"May 1. When I came to Carolina Mr. ———, a pious, benevolent, wealthy and highly respectable man, in advanced life, was suffering with a morbid affection of one of his limbs. He however became better, received company, rode out, and for two weeks appeared to be evidently recovering. But suddenly this local affection became a general one, and laid him on a bed of languishing, for a few days, during which his reason was occasionally staggered, and after exhibiting much Christian resignation, he expired, greatly and justly lamented.

"Two things impressed me deeply respecting the death of this good man.

"1. The fact that while his end was approaching, not by doubtful steps, but by a definite and certain, and speedy progress, (for his *limb was mortified,)* he was not informed of his condition, except as it must have been in some measure revealed to him by circumstances.

"The motives of friends in this case were unquestionably good. Mr. ——— had been long and eminently pious. His preparation for death could not be doubted; and it was feared that a disclosure of its near approach might distress him. Mrs. ———, who is in all respects a worthy partner of so worthy a husband, shrunk, I am told from the anguish of an explicit parting, on her own account as well as his. But while the delicate sensibility which led to this course is greatly to be respected, I cannot but think it inconsistent with those enlarged and exalted views which the death bed of a Christian is adapted to inspire. When the finger of Providence points distinctly to his last hour, why should we cover his eyes? Why deny ourselves the comfort of his parting counsels and blessing; and him the privilege of honoring his Saviour and his Christian hope, in the last conflict, and of meeting that conflict by a little season of special preparation? O how unmeaning is the commiseration which says of such an one, 'Poor man, he is dead and gone;'—when a thousand worlds would not tempt him to reoccupy his fallen tabernacle of clay.*

"2. Mr. ——— had been, habitually, a beneficent

* An instance of the triumph of faith in a pious African, came to Dr. Porter's knowledge in one of his southern excursions, which so deeply impressed him that he recorded it. ——— "*A Christian* negro, on his death bed, when he was called '*poor Pompey,*' said—'No say *poor* Pompey now, I *king* Pompey.'" To the record Dr. P. added the remark, "Pagan Athens furnished no parallel of sublimity."

man. Towards objects of compassion, still more towards objects of public utility, and peculiarly towards objects embracing the interests of evangelical religion, his heart was always expected to feel with tender sensibility; and, of course, the solicitors of charity by whom Charleston has been as often visited as any other spot of the United States, were accustomed to resort to Mr. ——— as a liberal patron of every good enterprize. As he had but two daughters, whose personal accomplishments had secured them very advantageous matrimonial connections, and as his property was supposed to be about half a million of dollars, it was confidently expected that large donations would be found in his will to some of the great charities of this day. I am told that these donations were but two, amounting only to one thousand dollars.

"Now, I cannot account for this fact, without supposing, in the first place, that his will must have been of long standing, and so made under the refrigerant influence of that dreary night from which the church is but just beginning to awake. Or, in the next place, that false views of family distinction and consequence, to which wealth so much contributes, especially in this region, must have had undue influence on the good man's judgment. If this latter supposition is the true one, it only furnishes a new proof how much the Christian, who associates with the first rank of the wealthy and fashionable, needs to guard his heart with increasing vigilance, against the insinuating and seductive influence of maxims adopted by worldly men, while they are in direct hostility to the principles of the gospel. O, when shall the combined instruction of experience and of revelation, teach wealthy Christians that there are nobler ends to which their money may be applied than to transmit a large estate to heirs, even could they have assurance that it will not be abused—but especially when it so often proves a rock to shipwreck the comfort, the

reputation, and the souls of their children! Before the prosperous Christian is called into eternity, it is important that he should have at least a few hours to fix an unwavering eye upon its realities, to dispel the blur with which worldly attachments and habits may have obstructed his spiritual vision.

"May 5. John's Island. In addition to the common courtesies afforded to strangers, in this hospitable region, I am favored with opportunities to ride, at my own pleasure, on horseback or in a chair. After riding a mile or two this morning, the sky became suddenly overcast, and it began to rain before I was aware that I was in danger of being wet. As I had neither surtout nor umbrella, I resorted to an adjacent plantation, where I found a pleasant family, who welcomed me to a retreat from the shower, and offered me a chaise to guard me on my return, and a servant to accompany me on my saddle.

"While the shower lasted I entered into conversation with a young gentleman, who had spent one winter at the Philadelphia medical school, and expected to spend another winter in hearing the same course of lectures read a second time, having also taken the precaution to hire them *transcribed* against the next winter. By this *passive process* he expected to become a learned physician.

"Now to one who has lived to any good purpose in this world, nothing can be more certain than that men are made by their own efforts; and, allowing for the obvious difference in native powers, the substantial qualities for usefulness, which any one will possess at the age of forty, depend on the single article of *industry*. The whole system of instruction by public lectures, as it exists in European seminaries, without collateral exercises to drill and invigorate the minds of young men, is adapted to make literary dunces, rather than scholars. And the cases are few in which the ardor and enterprize of the pupil can in

any good measure be relied on, as a substitute for those excitements to daily and diligent study which the university itself ought to furnish."

While Dr. Porter's stay in Charleston and the vicinity obviously promoted his convalescence, it gave him opportunity to pursue study with much greater facilities than he could have enjoyed at home. He was also usefully employed in raising funds for the American Education Society, and for indigent young men residing at the Theological Seminary. As the Education Society did not, at that time, extend appropriations to its beneficiaries in their professional course, Dr. Porter was, in this way, instrumental in affording very timely and important relief to many young men, who on account of indigence despaired of enjoying the course of theological instruction prescribed by the statutes of the seminary. Several, indeed, who are now occupying stations of distinguished usefulness, gratefully acknowledged to him their indebtedness to this aid alone, for ability to pursue a full course of professional study. Of the funds which he procured for the special benefit of young men at the seminary, he took the sole management while he lived.

While in Charleston, Dr. Porter met the lamented President Brown of Dartmouth college, who with his wife, having spent the preceding winter in the interior of Carolina, had just returned to that place with the design of proceeding homeward by land. This design, Dr. Porter, who viewed him as near his end, considered perilous, and attempted to dissuade him from it; but finding his purpose fixed, he kindly afforded him all the encouragement and aid in his power. In a letter to Mrs. Porter, he remarks,—"My expectation is that he will never see New England. It grieves me to think on the case of this respectable and afflicted man. But I will not say, 'how

dark are the ways of Providence!'—for there is no darkness except what results from my own defective vision: and I hope to meet this dear man, and that at no very distant period, in a state where it will be more manifest than hitherto it has been, that 'God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.'"

A few days before Dr. Porter intended to return to New England, an incident occurred, which, but for the kind interposition of his heavenly protector, might have terminated his life. The circumstances are thus related in the journal from which the preceding extracts are taken.

"Charleston, May 27, 1820. One week ago to-day, I stepped into a chair to ride down to the wharf, and inquire as to the practicability of sailing for Savannah, a measure I had for some time contemplated. In the middle of the city, near Union Bank, the horse took fright, and running a few rods, came directly against a brick wall at right angles with the street we had been in. Mr. C———, the gentleman who was driving, and myself, were precipitated on the side walk with great violence. I fell on my left side, receiving a contusion in the chest, just where my pocket book full of papers, was interposed betwixt my body and the stones of the side walk. At the same instant my head struck the pavement, just above my left ear and on the back of it, and my left hip was severely bruised. The horse was young and athletic, and frantic with terror. A post and a tree prevented his wheeling to the left; and in wheeling the other way, he passed directly over me with several violent leaps. At this moment he set his foot on my forehead, and another foot on my right leg. By the time he had gone back about five rods, where he dashed the chair in pieces, I had recovered my feet; and from the regular exercise of my mind, at the instant, perceived that my brain had not sustained a fatal injury. A crowd

of people assembled at once, proffering me their aid. I walked a few steps to a boarding house, and was soon visited by two respectable physicians. After blood-letting, by which the difficulty of respiration, occasioned by the concussion in my chest, subsided, I returned in a carriage to Mr. O'Neale's, where I received every attention, not only that my case required, but that the most assiduous kindness could suggest."

In a letter to Mrs. Porter of the same date, he adds:—

"I continued to mend of the soreness and bruises: on Wednesday rode out, and every day since; and to tell you all that need be said in a word, though I had a hair-breadth escape from instant death, and though I shall of course be thrown back some days, as to general health, it is my deliberate opinion that God does not design any lasting injury to my frail body from this occurrence. A few days more of caution, as to cold and effort, will I trust remove all the inconvenience that remains of the fall. I give Mrs. O'Neale the credit of being the best nurse I have ever found, except my wife. Indeed this is pre-eminently the region of kindness to strangers. The Lord bless this dear family, and reward them a thousand fold.*

* Mr. and Mrs. O Neale, both since deceased, belonged to a circle of friends in Charleston and the vicinity, to whom Dr. Porter became strongly attached, and to whose generous hospitality he felt himself deeply indebted. Their kindness he mentions more frequently, because after having tendered to him the hospitality of their house as a guest, they consented, at his urgent request, to admit him as one of their family, and to receive such remuneration, as the usual charge for board could make, for services which to him were invaluable; and which can be adequately rewarded only by Him who hath said, that those who minister to his disciples because they are his, shall in no wise lose their reward. During several of his last visits to Charleston, he was permitted to find a home in this excellent family—a home rendered all that he could wish, by unwearied kindness.

"During repeated absences and long journies, in which I have been separated from you, my dear wife, this is the first time that I have been snatched from the door of death. God has protected me while travelling thousands of miles among rocks, and has sent me here to be dashed on those imported from my own country. May he give me grace to improve the residue of my spared life in an acceptable manner. I bless his name that in a moment when sudden death was before me, I had no distressing emotions. Though I have been an unprofitable servant, and there are many things which I wish and hope to do in my great Master's work, still, at my Master's call, I would desire to leave this world cheerfully: and for some time have regarded it as my habitual duty to leave nothing unfinished, which should fill me with reluctance to obey that call, however suddenly it may come."

Dr. Porter reached Andover the latter part of June, and resumed his duties with health greatly improved.

From letters written the latter part of 1820 and the beginning of 1821, it appears that many of the friends of religion and learning in South Carolina, were very solicitous that Dr. Porter should succeed to the presidency of the college in that State, left vacant by the death of Rev. Dr. Maxcy. These letters contain urgent requests that he would permit himself to be named to the trustees for that office, and that he would give some encouragement that if elected, he would accept the appointment. It is not known what were his feelings on this subject, but we may infer that the considerations which induced him to decline similar calls to other institutions, would, if in this instance he had been elected, have prevented his acceptance.

CHAPTER VII.

Voyage to Baltimore—Letters—Voyage to Charleston—Memoranda—Returning, attends General Assembly—Consulted respecting presidency of Dartmouth College.

In the fall vacation of 1820, hoping to confirm his health to such a degree as would enable him to spend the approaching winter in Andover, Dr. Porter determined by advice of medical friends, on a voyage from Boston to Baltimore. Being, on this excursion, without companions of congenial feelings, and having but indifferent accommodations, he sought relief in noting the reflections suggested by his circumstances. To Mrs. Porter he thus writes :—

"*Schooner Helen, off Nantucket, Oct.* 12, 1820.

"My dear Wife,

"Friends who are sometimes separated, it is reasonable to believe feel an increase of mutual attachment from such separation. The constitution of human minds and the testimony of experience on other subjects, might lead us to expect this. The uninterrupted enjoyment of each other's society, which is allowed to most husbands and wives, renders their happiness, when it deserves this name, scarcely perceptible to themselves; whereas an occasional separation awakens the tender recollection of

kind offices, which perhaps might otherwise never have been properly estimated; strengthens the consciousness of mutual dependence; recalls the absent friend with the most advantageous associations of endearment; and prepares the mind to overlook those minor irritations, inseparable almost from all relations that exist among human beings. From these remarks, I of course except the cases of frequent or long absence, which change the order of social affections and habits;—such cases as those in which one head of a family is always on sea, and the other on land. But whether or not the amount of happiness, in such separations as those to which you and I have been called, is *increased*, it is doubtless rendered more vivid and sensible; for men in health scarcely think that a quiet respiration is any favor, while its enjoyment is indescribable to one just recovered from a paroxysm of asthma.

"In these remarks you will perceive that I am seeking consolation, in view of our parting last evening; and I suppose you will allow it to be the part of wisdom to 'educe good from ill.' I should indeed accuse myself of strange insensibility, not to leave with painful reluctance, such a home as mine, doubly dear to me, since the delicate state of my health has rendered your kind offices so valuable to me, as to make it impossible that I should find any equivalent for them abroad. As I have determined to write you a long letter, I seize this calm day to begin it, knowing that to-morrow we may be tossing on the angry waves, so that I cannot hold my pen, if indeed I can hold up my head. If our domestic arrangements had permitted you to attend me, I perceive that the interior accommodations of this vessel would have been to you a painful contrast to the comforts of your own parlor and chamber; and if you had been as sick as two

young ladies on board, it would have been a source of much uneasiness to me.

"Among the millions that compose this busy, bustling world, I am really, as well as comparatively, of little consequence; and yet I am aware that such is the arrangement, which Providence for the best reasons has established, that you will be interested to know that my head does not ache, nor my pulse throb with fever; nor my stomach loathe food. Indeed I know that it is no impeachment of your benevolence to presume, that in some respects my comfort is more important to you than that of all Asia. It gives me pleasure therefore to assure you, that our heavenly Father smiles unexpectedly on this little enterprise which I have undertaken. I am much relieved of my cold. You must not be anxious respecting me. God is my preserver; and on sea or land, I am immortal till my work is done. Take care of your health, in the absence of your affectionate husband."

The preceding letter, which Dr. Porter had expected to commit to the mail in Baltimore, he sent the day after it was written from Barnstable, whither they were driven by a head wind. During the passage, he again wrote:—

"*Schooner Helen, Oct.* 12, 1820.
"*Off Maryland shore.*

"My dear Lucy,

"I perceive my letter, begun soon after leaving port, should have been dated 13th and not 12th. The 14th we beat against head winds through Martha's Vineyard Sound, and anchored for the night in Tarpaulin Cove. Sabbath 15th, in the morning, our captain, a daring and driving man, made his way with difficulty through several vessels that had anchored without us, and were too cautious to go to sea with such indications of rough weather. Through the day we had a heavy breeze from the south

east, increasing till six o'clock on Monday morning. All this time we were obliged to drive through a tempestuous, raging ocean, with as much sail as we could carry, or be driven on the back of Long Island. Indeed had the wind changed a few points south, the hazard of being wrecked must have been great. But the God of the sea and of the dry land ordered it otherwise. We had however but one passenger that escaped severe sea-sickness; and the steward and captain, who have been (especially the latter) almost constantly at sea for a long time, and last in port but a few days, were so sea-sick for many hours, as to be almost disabled. All whose duties required them to be on deck, were drenched with rain and sea-water; the forward deck being washed continually by the waves. The cabin also was wet by water dashing down the companion way.

"If you were desirous of having a description of the terrific majesty of the ocean, in a storm, you could easily find many better than I can give, with this difference as to your interest in the scene described in books, that *your husband was not there.* But you will never understand any description of this sort, while it is true, as I hope it may always be, that *yourself* was not there. Our captain is a man of good understanding and good manners, and respectful to Christian institutions. But the mate, and some of the people encouraged by his example, are impiously profane; and that, as it seems, from the mere influence of habit, and the want of religious restraints, while they possess all the generosity and kindness of feeling common to mariners. But the transition from the tranquillity and the sacred delights of a Sabbath on shore, to a Sabbath at sea, in the uproar of a storm, with such accommodations and such companions as are found in a coasting packet, is painful in the extreme. And if I were as superstitious as these sons of Neptune, retaining

too my present Christian principles, I should have expected our vessel to be buried under mountains of waves, as a just retribution from Him whose name they so dreadfully profane. As it is, however, I cannot expect a special act of divine vengeance in such a case, without expecting the instant depopulation or annihilation of our sinful world.

"In many respects, I perceive men are every where alike, with the only difference made by the grace of God, and by less restraints. That these uncultivated minds should be fretful under adverse events, though plainly ordered by Providence, is not strange to me; while I see the same disposition indulged among Christians of high advantages and professions, and feel it so often, I am ashamed to say, in myself. In all societies of human beings, there is some one unfortunate enough to be the victim of all the irritations felt by the rest. In a ship, this is commonly the cabin boy or cook; in other cases, it is precisely that individual whose station renders him most liable to blame for *little* faults, and least able to defend himself.

"You will not mistake, if you conclude from the strain of these two letters, that time hangs heavily on my hands. It is a relief to me to write on, while my pen is in hand, and while I write to one who will require no apology for my matter, provided my sheet is filled with lines closely written.

"On Monday morning the wind died away, then suddenly changed to north west, and has been till now (Tuesday evening) as favorable as could be wished.

"Thursday, 19. About midnight of Tuesday we entered the Chesapeake Bay, and the course to Baltimore being nearly north, the wind which was favorable before, became a head wind, so that our progress since has been slow; at the same time we have a smooth sea, and find

real comfort in being released from our violent tossing. When we came in sight of Maryland shore, the wind was fresh from the north west, and every passenger and some of the seamen were simultaneously attacked with a violent cough, and all the symptoms of the same influenza, that was so prevalent in Boston. My frail body of course suffered with the rest. Tuesday night, yesterday, and last night, I was full of pain, from which I obtained relief only by hot drinks, and hot bottles. My head was in extreme agony with rheumatism for many hours. I desire to be submissive to all the variety of infirmity which it pleases God that I shall suffer; while I have the fullest conviction that his chastisements are both *just* and *kind*. *Just*, because I deserve them, and *kind*, because I need them. So far as means are concerned, however, I have no doubt that my life has been preserved scores of times, by exciting a powerful action on the skin, to divert inflammation from my vital organs. To-day I am quite comfortable, though obliged to be cautious after so much perspiration.

"Friday, 20. This morning about five o'clock I was awaked by the noise and agitation of the vessel, and by the profane cursing of the mate and seamen. At first, I supposed we were near Baltimore; and that the capricious passion of joy, aping sometimes grief, at others vexation, was expressed by this unseemly language. But I soon learned that a head wind blew so hard as to obstruct our progress. Last night my rheumatism gave me less trouble than the night before, but still made me feverish and full of pain. To-day like yesterday, I keep close. Our cook has kept his berth, being sick; and his absence is some relief from the filth and laziness which are his chief properties. If I had not had my arrow-root, I must have suffered; being wholly unable to eat the best food, prepared as it has been here.

"Sabbath, 22. Still on this restless element. I am relieved, however, from the offensive conversation which has troubled me so much; as the captain very promptly caused it to cease, on my representing to him how revolting it has been to my feelings. And Mary, a passenger, a very ignorant servant girl, received my reproof for her foolish talk with the seamen, so as both to reform and apparently to esteem me much for my faithfulness.

"Tuesday, 24. Baltimore. I came on shore at six o'clock Sabbath evening, having been five days within the capes; a passage which our captain has made fifty times, and never before exceeded two days. Our whole passage, however, was but ten days, which is reckoned quite good. Yesterday I spent at a hotel, but found myself too unwell to be among such a crowd; and last evening came to my present lodgings, a respectable, quiet boarding house, sought for me by the pious and lovely partner of Mr. V—. I have been so full of rheumatism, that both pairs of my thick drawers, and all my wrappers flannel and leather, have barely sufficed to keep me from freezing. Last night I feared being sick: but warm drinks, a full quota of blankets, and as fine nursing as you could desire, gave me a quiet night's rest; and having kept in all day, I am this evening sitting up, and almost well. No plan as to my future absence—all must be cheerfully submitted.

"Yours ever."

"P. S. Recollect that dear Mr. and Mrs. Bartlet, and Mr. and Mrs. Homes will wish to know that you have heard from me."

From the preceding letter, the reader will learn something of the extreme caution which Dr. Porter found it necessary to practice in respect to exposure, diet, clothing, &c. Though practiced in this case in sickness, he was for years scarcely exempt from the same necessity, even

for a day. So much accustomed was he to be racked with pain, that when the severity of an attack had passed by, he used often, as in the close of this letter, to call himself "almost well." As soon as he thought it prudent to travel, he commenced his journey homeward by land, having received more injury than benefit from the excursion. Though he spent the following winter in Andover in the discharge of official duty, early in the spring his labors were arrested by an attack of pleurisy, which so effectually prostrated his health, that his physicians advised him to try the effect of a voyage to Carolina. As soon as it was deemed safe, he left home for New York, whence he sailed for Charleston. Here he spent a few days with beloved friends, to whose kindness he was already deeply indebted. Respecting this tour we find the following memoranda.

"New York, May 1, 1821. This MS.* which I had supposed to be lost, I have just found on a shelf of rubbish, at the consignee's of the ship Franklin, in which I sailed from Charleston last year.

"About the last of March, my health which had been quite comfortable during the winter, sunk under an attack of pleurisy. The latter half of April I spent, in a very delicate state on my way to New York, amid violent storms of snow, by which I was confined at Boston, and again at Providence. A few days of fine weather at New York however, enabled me to regain my habits of exposure to the air, and contributed much to my restoration. To-day I sail in the ship President, for Charleston.

"May 5. At six o'clock, P. M., landed at Charleston, having been favored with a passage unusually prosperous and pleasant.

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* The MS. containing the brief journal of his absence in 1820, which has already been presented to the reader.

"May 7. In a walk about the city, I incidentally passed the spot where I was so violently thrown from a gig last year. At once a thousand tender recollections rushed upon my mind, and almost overwhelmed me. To what purpose has my life, rescued by the kind interposition of Providence in a moment of extreme peril, been devoted. Oh, how little has this wretched heart felt the thousand obligations imposed upon it, by the unremitted, unmerited goodness of my heavenly benefactor.

"May 10. The streets of a crowded city furnish innumerable sources of instruction, to an intelligent, and especially to a pious mind. Yet these are overlooked by those who are immersed in the bustle of business, or in the whirl of fashionable amusement. In this and in other cities, I have often passed by objects of extreme indigence and wretchedness, and have felt a transient emotion of compassion or of gratitude, which has too commonly left no valuable impression on my mind.

"To-day I met a little *chimney sweep*, in the usual costume of his profession, a few dirty rags; and seeking employment to earn his bread among the suffocating dust of soot and cinders. As he passed along in the crowd, occasionally uttering his shrill and piercing note—the tender of his services to those who might need them; I observed him to carry his hoop and stick, with which he amused himself whenever the foot-way for a moment was free of passengers. There was something in the appearance of this poor child that strongly awakened my sensibilities, and involuntarily I turned round and looked after him, then went on my way with these reflections: 'In the most degrading of all employments, one, indeed, the very existence of which is a reproach to civilized society, this poor boy exhibits the same cheerfulness as is common to childhood in its most pleasant forms. Probably he is even happier than the boy of princely parentage, whose little

heart is vexed with a thousand artificial wants, and whose wishes are anticipated by the misguided tenderness of friends. As an immortal being, the degradation of this child is greatly to be deprecated; while it is but one among millions of facts, that exhibit the sovereignty of Him 'who giveth no account of his matters.' O my God!—thou hast made *me* to differ, in the advantages of birth, and the instructions, examples, and restraints of a Christian education.'"

Dr. Porter returned by way of Philadelphia, reaching that place in season to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, as a delegate from the General Association of Massachusetts; having been highly favored as on his outward passage, with delightful weather, and (what perhaps was scarcely less conducive to his health) with intelligent and Christian society. At this meeting of the General Assembly, an opportunity offered for the happy exercise of the Christian discretion by which he was characterised. A subject was under discussion more than ordinarily adapted to excite unkind feelings, and several members had manifested a spirit which to him was painful. As the debate was assuming an angry character, a member called on Dr. Porter for his opinion respecting a particular point. He rose, and with an air rendered deeply solemn by the painful interest of the scene before him, said—"Moderator, my heart has been pained by the spirit exhibited by many of the brethren on this subject. We have need to *humble* ourselves before God." The effect was electric. In a moment anger seemed to disappear, and penitence to be depicted on every countenance. A motion immediately followed, seconded by several voices, that Dr. Porter should lead in prayer for divine forgiveness and direction. After a fervent address to the throne of grace,

several brethren publicly expressed their gratitude to him for his timely reproof.

In April, 1821, he received a communication from one of the trustees of Dartmouth college, informing him that in filling the vacancy which was about to be caused by the resignation of their president, (Rev. Dr. Dana,) the unanimous choice would doubtless fall on him, if they might be encouraged to expect his acceptance. His attachment to this institution, as his Alma Mater, was strong, and his desire ardent to promote its interests; yet he could offer no encouragement to such a choice.

CHAPTER VIII.

Contemplates going to Europe—Communication to trustees—Varies his determination and goes to Havana and New Orleans—Letters —Memorandum returning—Salutary effect on his health.

Though Dr. Porter derived obvious advantage from his last tour to Carolina, and was able to perform his labors at home during the summer following, disease had made such ravages upon his constitution, that his colleagues and medical advisers believed it his duty, if possible, to arrest its progress by a more protracted suspension of official functions. It was thought he would be most likely to derive permanent benefit from a voyage to Europe, and a winter's residence in its southern latitudes, in which opinion he was himself disposed to concur. The grounds of this opinion he states in a communication to the trustees, requesting leave of absence.

"*To the Rev. and Hon. the Trustees of Phillips' Academy.*

"Gentlemen,

"Since my severe illness in the spring of 1819, my health has been gradually mending, so that I have been able to prosecute the writing and delivery of public lectures through the term now closed; and have in other respects performed as much official service, as in any equal period

since my connection with the seminary; except that I have avoided duties abroad in the evening.

"Still my ablest medical advisers, who know my system and predispositions think decidedly, that it would be improper for me to hazard an exposure to the severity of our winter, without more firmness than I have at present. They are also of opinion, from the uniform advantage attending partial experiments of the kind, that a voyage to the south of Europe, or to some remote part of this continent, would promise more than all other means to remove my liability to violent attacks of disease.

"The experience, gentlemen, which I have had of your generous sympathy, increases the painful reluctance with which I mention this subject. But it is my duty to bow to the will of Him, 'whose I am, and whom I profess to serve.' And associated as I am with interests so much more important than those of myself and family, it is my privilege that I may cast myself on the guardians of these sacred interests for direction.

"If those in whom I should most confide, think it my duty to proceed with my labors here next winter, and trust the result to Providence, I will do it without hesitation. But should it be thought expedient that I should be at liberty to conform to circumstances, I request leave of the trustees to be absent for the winter, or a part of it, as the case may require. I wish it to be understood also, that, in the event of my absence, I shall endeavor to make such arrangements, that my salary for the time being may be applied to the employment of a temporary substitute, should the trustees see fit to authorize a committee to select a proper man for the above purpose.

"Permit me to add, gentlemen, that if it pleases God to give me sufficient health, there are many reasons why I desire to finish a course of public lectures in my department. One of these reasons is, that no course corres-

ponding with that contemplated in our statutes, has heretofore been given in any language. The materials for the execution of this design, I have digested to a considerable extent, as the result of all the reading and experience connected with the labors of my office here.

"But strongly as I am attached to my office, and to the circle of friends with whom I have been associated for nine years past, I shall consider it my duty promptly to relinquish my plan, whenever the guardians of this beloved seminary shall think that its interests will be promoted by such a measure.

"I remain, gentlemen, yours with great respect,

"E. Porter."

This request the trustees with their characteristic spirit of accommodation, readily granted. In pursuance of his purpose, early in autumn, he procured the papers necessary to secure him protection under the seal of the United States, designing to spend the winter in Italy. Instead of crossing the Atlantic however, he varied his determination and sailed for Charleston, whence, after a few weeks, he proceeded by way of Havana to New Orleans; returning after a brief absence to Charleston.

Several extracts from letters written during this absence, follow; they are inserted consecutively—the first dated on his outward passage from Boston.

"*Brig Two Friends, Lat.* 35, *Lon.* 68, }
Nov. 15, 1821. }

"My dear Wife,

"Among the sacrifices to which God in his holy Providence has called me in past years, none has been so great as that which now calls me away from the endearments of home, and of our beloved hill of Zion. One reason why I feel thus, probably is, that the increasing attachment to home which commonly attends advance in years, is

strengthened in my case by infirmity of body. Another reason is, that heretofore when I have gone abroad, it has been from immediate and urgent necessity; whereas in the present case, I have yielded to the opinion of physicians that a more seasonable retreat from the northern winter, might prevent those severe attacks of disease that have repeatedly prostrated my feeble frame, and as a measure of precaution, render me less liable to those attacks hereafter.

"Though I am on the whole well satisfied that this view of the case is correct, the struggle between my heart and my judgment has been great, considering the magnitude of the work which I am called to leave. But enough of this painful trial. Oh for more of that submission which enabled my blessed Master to say, 'the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'

"We did not sail on the afternoon of the 8th, till near 3 o'clock, Capt. S—— having been detained by the desertion of his steward. While searching for him, he engaged another, who also ran away; and just at the moment of sailing, both were brought forcibly on board. The second, after one attempt to escape to the wharf, was compelled to return, and leaping overboard was drowned at our side, refusing the aid of ropes, &c. thrown to him from the deck. This act of desperation resulted from shame and anger, under the influence of intoxication, that brutal sin which makes such havoc among seamen.

"We went down the bay with a fine breeze, and next day were becalmed some hours. From that time till yesterday we encountered adverse winds of unusual violence. The surges have not yet subsided, though it has been almost calm for twenty-four hours. To-day has been uncommonly fine, so that the ladies have gone on deck for the first time, and I have been able to walk and split wood on deck. We are now in the latitude of Cape Hatteras,

but near five hundred miles east of Charleston longitude, outside of the Gulf stream, with a temperature of 68 by the thermometer. Our captain is skillful and kind, a very pleasant man; and our brig a strong, safe vessel; but above all, the Maker of this great deep, and the Ruler of these restless elements is our keeper. To him we owe our preservation amid these raging billows.

"Charleston, Nov. 29. Through the goodness of God we arrived yesterday afternoon. I fear, my dear wife, you will suffer anxiety on account of our long passage in this month of storms. Last Friday night, after a severe blow from S. W., the wind came suddenly round to west, and blew tremendously. We had entered the Gulf stream hoping to cross it, but were forced back, after such violent tossing as I never before experienced. Not only crockery and glass, but trunks, chairs, and men were dashed about the cabin; and the oldest seamen could not stand or sit without holding fast. Truly we saw 'the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep.' The last two days of the passage were as unexpectedly pleasant and prosperous, as the preceding had been boisterous. About twenty vessels came up to town with us; one twenty-two days from Middletown, one twenty-five from New York, and one thirty from Baltimore. I came directly to Mr. O'Neale's, and lodge in my old room. The dear, afflicted man was glad to see me. The servants came sobbing, to shake hands with their mistress's friend. My heart, which had been swelling with emotion, as I came up the street, and entered the dwelling of that lately beloved and useful woman, burst from its constraint and vented itself in a half hour's weeping. If it were not so incorrigible a heart, it must be made better by this painfully instructive lesson. Lord, make it a better heart!

"Invariably yours."

"*Charleston, Dec.* 7, 1821.

"My dear Wife,

"The expectation which I formed early in the autumn, of going to the Mediterranean, and the sacrifice of my vacation accordingly, would have left me badly prepared to encounter the winter at home. The sinking of my system, of which I was conscious for some time before my departure, was more fully developed afterwards in the entire derangement of my digestive organs, and the prostration of my strength to a degree greater than usual without violent disease. On the ocean, especially for the first ten days, I had no appetite; and after we reached the warm latitudes, the weavles, (a rice insect,) and certain other worse enemies of sleep, annoyed me even more than the commotion of the agitated elements. Since our arrival an influenza has been somewhat prevalent, but I have been exempt from all irritation of lungs, so as scarcely once to need the relief of my customary *hem.* For several days my vigor has been increasing, with an excellent appetite, and to-day I have walked at least six miles.

"You wish, I know, to learn my plan for the winter. Mr. O'Neale, with his characteristic kindness, invited me to make his house my home. But as I wished not to live on hospitality, I consented to do so, on condition that he would take me as a boarder, and present me his bills for payment as such. To this he assents. Here I have a quiet chamber, with my own fire. The servants are kind, obliging and faithful, especially the cook, who is unwearied in her attentions; so that my chief danger perhaps is that which besets me at home, viz. being injured by too much kindness. She stood by me this evening and said, 'We talk in kitchen after missus die, will Massa Porter ever come again? Some say no:—I say he *will* come, and see poor Massa O'Neale;—he so lonely, nobody talk to in the evening.' Then she went on to say—'no so good massa

in Charleston ;—I go on my knees to take care of him ;—missus say when she die, Grace, take care your massa.' Then she repeated the dying advice of Mrs. O'Neale to the servants, and described her triumph in the tenderest manner. Bob, the waiting man, is hopefully pious, and has learned to read the Bible which I gave him last year. I shall remain at least six or eight weeks longer, as I have better accommodations as to study, food, and exercise than I can have elsewhere. I shall study as many hours as if I were at home. A young Protestant minister from France, calls several evenings in a week to teach me French pronunciation, and to be taught English by me.

" I have opportunity here to do much for the Education Society, by correspondence with the interior, and distribution of pamphlets. Tell Mr. ———, that I wish him to send me a good supply of the Education Society tracts, for Carolina and Georgia. In the course of the winter I mean to visit Georgia and New Orleans, if God will. Tell Br. ———, that I shall consider my commission as agent of the Education Society for the south, as continuing unless otherwise informed.

" You know how essential it has been to the happiness of my past life to be a *busy* man. Though I came here for health, I do not wish to be *idle*, and I *cannot* be. Indeed, systematic walking, riding on the saddle, and sawing wood; receiving and returning the visits of friends ; study, and labor for the Education Society, afford me ample employment. Yesterday I procured a meeting, preparatory to more efficient operations of the South Carolina Education Society. Tell Mr. ———, that during the cold winter months he must keep his furnace full of fuel to heat New England. His circular is efficacious wherever it goes.

" Tell Mr. ——, of the senior class, that I intended before leaving home, to procure some of the students, who would interest themselves in the thing, to correspond

with the officers of colleges, and learn what encouragement can be had for an American edition of Quinctillian's Institutes, to be comprised in two 8vo. volumes. This may be ascertained in some measure by correspondence, as the patronage must be found chiefly at the literary institutions. Yours immutably."

"*Charleston, Jan.* 12, 1822.

"My dear Wife,

"Your welcome favor of Dec. 24, arrived several days ago. I am sorry to learn that you had been ill. You leave me to infer rather than say that your health was restored. So far as health of body depends on the mind, devotional reading and prayer are doubtless favorable to it. But the body has claims of its own. Its *food*, *exercise*, and *rest*, are distinct from those of the mind; and religion demands such an attention to both as that we may fulfil all our social and relative as well as our devotional duties. Take care of your *health* my dear wife, for the sake of many who love you, especially for *my* sake.

"If I have forgotten to say before, let me say now, that I object to the reading of my letters to individuals, unless in special cases. If a letter is of such a cast that a friend may take it himself, there is no tax on his politeness or his patience. He may read one sentence or ten as he pleases. But to compel him to hear a whole letter, or a page, whatever engagements he may have, is quite another thing. I extend this remark to letters generally, and to passages in books which interest us. We have no right, on the ground of civility, to presume that the same interest will be felt by another. I have myself often felt the same vexation that Horace did, towards those who would 'hold me fast, and *read me dead.*'

"I hear occasionally from our young men in the

interior; they are doing well. —— ——, since his return from New England, takes better aim, and fires heavier shots than heretofore. Nothing but pungent doctrinal instruction seems wanting here, with God's blessing, to produce a revival.

"I have proposed that the ladies here shall have a regular correspondence with those in Boston, for mutual communication as to means and amount of Christian operations. Tell Brother —— I thank him, and will answer his letter perhaps from New Orleans, whither I expect to sail to-morrow in the steam ship. Tell Mrs. —— her very good and useful brother sends love. I dined there to-day with my friend J. W. Esq., who reached the city yesterday, and embarks to-morrow as my companion for New Orleans. This is as pleasant as unexpected to us both. Mr. G——, a pious invalid minister from New York, is also to go with us.

"Constantly yours."

Steam Ship Robert Fulton, Gulf of Mexico,
Jan. 29, 1822.

"My dear Wife,

"As an acknowledgment to my gracious Preserver and Benefactor, and of my duty to you, I resume my pen to give you a brief history of myself since leaving Charleston. Our accommodations have not been in all respects as good as we had reason to expect, from general report, and from information obtained at the office of the consignee in Charleston. About the fourth day I was attacked with sore throat and general cold. Besides Mr. W———, the only pious passengers were Mr. ——, and Mr. ——, a lawyer.

"The Havana, at which we staid three days, is a pagano-Christian city, with about one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants. It is one of the strongest military

posts in the world, inclosed with walls; and the harbor, the finest I ever saw, is defended by a complete investment of forts. Off Tortugas we were chased by what we supposed a pirate, but outsailed her. On arrival at Havana, it appeared that eight or ten American vessels within a few days had been robbed, some burnt, and many cases of murder. The population of Havana look like a dirty, degraded race. Among them, every few rods you meet a ghostly looking friar. The churches retain the appearance of that ancient splendor which they derived from unbounded wealth and superstition. I had before no conception of the extravagant expenditures of the Catholics to maintain the mummeries which they call religion. The streets are narrow and filthy, and the houses ancient, with massive shutters for windows instead of glass, and floors of solid stone and plaister. We took lodgings at an American boarding-house at two dollars and fifty cents a day—a sufficient price for me, as my food was arrow root.

"Feb. 1. By the smiles of Providence I am about relieved of my cold for several days past. We have entered the great Mississippi. Our passengers have been of a peculiarly mixed character; most of them profane, and some extravagantly so. At the table we keep up the acknowledgment of God, but have not been able to establish daily worship. On the Sabbath after leaving Charleston the passengers attended decently in the cabin while I read part of the 107th Psalm and prayed. The next Sabbath was broken up by navigating the ship out of Havana, and we had no worship till evening. Neither Mr. G. nor I were well enough to preach on either day.

"Feb. 4. Day before yesterday we arrived at New Orleans in twenty hours from the mouth of the river, while other ships are from six to thirty days. A harsh wind renewed my cold to a slight degree, but by the

goodness of God, I was able to preach yesterday, to the destitute and interesting little flock of the lamented Larned; though it was rainy, and the notice short, the church having been shut up generally this winter. To-day I am quite comfortable, having walked some distance. The company of Mr. W. has been an unspeakable comfort to me. The few Christians here, gather around us with deep interest, and beg us to stay a few weeks. My heart bleeds for them.

"Charleston, Feb. 25. Through the goodness of God, I returned here this morning. Send this to father Bartlet in exchange for a long one I forward to him by this conveyance, bringing up to this time an account of my absence from Charleston. I did hope to continue my letters to the students on the voyage, but the confusion of the ship prevented;—I shall resume them soon.

"With immutable affection yours."

The letter to Mr. Bartlet, giving an account of his returning voyage from New Orleans to Charleston, follows.

"*Gulf of Mexico, Feb.* 17, 1822.

"Respected and dear Sir,

"Though I was strongly solicited to stay some weeks at New Orleans, and though I had some weighty motives to comply with these solicitations, I thought it best to return with the steam ship to Charleston, that so far as I have strength, I may devote my undivided attention to the prosecution of my own official duties. This I might have done with far less expense, but with more interruption, at New Orleans than at Charleston; because at the latter place I have the command of my own room and time, not being called on for any ministerial service except such as I can perform without inconvenience; whereas the state of New Orleans, connected as it is

with a world of paganism in the west, would doubtless have excited in me emotions and efforts inconsistent with the main object of my visit to the south.

"We left New Orleans on the 8th inst. and arrived on the coast of Cuba on the 12th, and almost in sight of Havana, with a fine wind to reach it in three hours, when the captain, being a stranger to the coast and supposing himself to be off Matanzas, sailed westward twenty-four hours, and did not ascertain his mistake till he reached Cape Antonio. Having a strong head wind and being short of fuel, our progress back was difficult.

"Havana, Feb. 19. We arrived here yesterday and are to leave to-morrow for Charleston. As I had felt but little interest in visiting Cuba, I had taken no letters of introduction. I am therefore much indebted to the politeness of Capt. Jackson of Newburyport, who is here, and who has kindly devoted his time to-day, to introduce me to several respectable families, and attend me with Mr. S——, a merchant of your acquaintance, on a ride into the country. While the city of Havana presents at once a striking combination of wealth and magnificence with vice, superstition and filth, the soil and climate of the interior are incomparably fine. It was an unexpected gratification to me to witness the luxuriance of tropical fruits, trees, and plants of various kinds.

"While I was writing the last sentence, a young man put into my hand a letter to Rev. Mr. Byington, from the officers of the Moravian Missionary Society at Nassau, New Providence. The bearer was passenger in a schooner wrecked on that coast the last week. She belonged to Charleston, S. C., and had a large quantity of clothing, &c. for the Eliot mission, which articles the wreckers sold for a trifle to the negroes. But the Wesleyan society redeemed the valuable articles of communion plate presented by the church in Yale college to

the church in Eliot, and forwarded them by this young man. Being a stranger in New Orleans, whither he is to sail shortly, he called on me for advice, to whom he should commit the articles there, to be forwarded to Mr. Byington.

"Gulf Stream, off Florida, Feb. 21. Besides the schooner above mentioned, four other vessels were wrecked on the same reef, the same night (10th inst.), but I learned on seeing the young man again, that the communion plate was in a vessel wrecked four months ago.

"We left Havana yesterday at 10 o'clock, with a fair wind, and we are now about two hundred miles on our way. My thoughts return with a mixture of compassion and abhorrence to the Spanish island of Cuba, blessed to profusion by the bounties of the Creator, and cursed by the stupidity and vice of its inhabitants. Mr. S—— informed me that one of his coffee plantations of one hundred and eighty acres, yielded him last year a crop of forty thousand dollars. The cattle are large and fine, but make bad beef. The oxen I am told, a single pair harnessed by the horns, march off at quick step with a load of three tons. But the *men!*—ah, the *immortal* beings that throng that island, are a disgrace to the human character; and though nominally Christian, are sunk in a more hopeless state of ignorance and depravity than almost any spot shrouded in the night of paganism.

"Among our thirty-six passengers there are three of some distinction. Gen. ——— ———, whose public character you know, is possessed of great wealth. His cotton crop in South Carolina and in Louisiana is said to be not less than one hundred and twenty thousand dollars this year, and his sugar crop in Louisiana forty thousand more. Poor man, he is a stranger to all the noblest uses of money, and to all the consolations of piety. He advanced his infidel views to me very confidently at

first, but finding himself unable to stand a moment on the ground of argument, he became cautious, and has been uniformly civil. He has given me an invitation, which I cannot accept, to spend some time with him in Carolina. Gen. Lefebre Desnoettes, Buonaparte's favorite cavalry commander, came with us also from New Orleans. He is tall and slender; thirty-five or forty years old, a very intelligent and respectable man. He has resided in this country as a proscribed officer some years, but is about returning to make his peace with Louis. He is not fond of talking about his fallen master; but when I inquired of him whether any of the writings ascribed to Napoleon are genuine, he said he could not answer positively as to any except one recently published, as the ninth volume of Buonaparte's Works, the other eight being still unpublished. This ninth he has read, and is sure that none but Napoleon could have been the author. I have had much interesting conversation with him on various topics. In reply to my inquiry, what use is made of ardent spirits in the French armies, he assured me that it is never a part of rations; that very rarely a small use is made of brandy by common soldiers, but their daily allowance is merely a pound and a half of bread. All else as to food, drink and clothing they provide for themselves, though their wages are but six cents a day. At the battle of Waterloo he says not a man had seen meat for three days; he adds that French officers and soldiers are seldom sick; and that they can fight with very little to eat and drink. He says that he never saw ardent spirits used with water till he came to America, and what is stranger still, he never saw a Bible in any language, except the English, till I showed him one to-day in French. He read it for some time and thanked me. Though he prefers the Catholic religion to any other, he evidently does not believe the divine origin and obligation of any. Such is the genuine

influence of the Catholic worship. It makes the ignorant mass bigots, and the more enlightened, infidels. Not only the inquisition, but the priesthood and forms of this religion are publicly ridiculed on the stage at Havana, though there is no Protestant worship in the country.

"We have besides as a passenger, Capt. D—— of the United States' navy, who has just returned from Mexico. The principal interest I have felt in him arises from his minute description of that country, of which I have hitherto been very ignorant. He describes the interior of Mexico as a paradise, so far as climate and natural advantages of country are concerned. The thermometer ranges between 75 and 85 through the year. There are no fevers;—the people live to advanced age, and aside from the precious metals, have one of the richest countries on the globe. On the high grounds off from the coast, pines of different sorts, and on the coast hard woods grow to a great size. But the people are held in vassalage under the same superstition as in Cuba. In one cathedral, about forty miles from Mexico, the captain says there is a massive silver image of the virgin Mary;—a solid golden ball representing the sun, with the richest brilliants;—and one chandelier that cost one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. The ornaments in all cost half a million of dollars.

"Besides these, we had with us a Philadelphia captain, a decent man, lately wrecked off New Providence, whose brig was entirely lost. From the wreck he escaped in his boat with the crew, to a barren key four miles distant, where he found but one family, who notwithstanding their barbarous state of living, maintained family worship.

"Charleston, Feb. 25. We arrived here to-day. I cannot say till I am rested, whether my health is benefitted by the voyage. I presume it will be however. My friends say that I have gained some flesh. I hope the

time and expense of the voyage will not be lost to myself, and that it may be of some use to others, if God shall see fit to bless my very imperfect efforts on board the ship, where the passengers invited me to preach, and listened with very becoming attention.

"You see my dear sir, how eagerly I embrace any alleviation of the painful separation from my home and business. Indeed I long to return, and think this is the last sacrifice of the kind, which I shall think it my duty to make to prop a tottering constitution.

"Please to give my best love to dear Mrs. Bartlet, and all the circle of friends. I am as much at home here as I can be away from home. Will you have the goodness to send this to Mrs. Porter, as it is only a sequel to a hasty one I wrote her on my outward passage.

"With sincere respect and affection,

"Yours invariably."

"*March* 18, 1822.

"My dear Wife,

"We have had several days of cold east wind, so that vessels could not pass out of the harbor. I have just received a letter from Mr. Evarts, who arrived at Savannah the 14th, in eleven days from Boston. He says, 'prospects of restoration are favorable; but I wish to stand prepared for the will of God, whatever it may be.' He adds, 'I must make my letters short, as my physician forbids much writing and much talking.' For this painful information I was prepared by your last letter. Indeed, I was prepared for it by the *aspect* of the dear man last autumn, and by the excessive labor which I knew had devolved on him since the removal of Dr. Worcester. It is distressing that a man occupying a station more important perhaps, than any other layman in the United States, should be thus prematurely broken down. So it is, that

every man who is able and willing to work, is tempted to work himself to death, the 'harvest is so plenteous, and the laborers so few.' So be it, if God will. Blessed be his name, the church is safe; his own omnipotence will protect and prosper its interests; his own truth is guarantee that the work of evangelizing the world will go on,—will go on by human instruments; and let not human wisdom obtrude its counsels in determining who these instruments shall be. Mr. Evarts intends, if his health will permit, to commence his journey homeward in April, by Brainerd and Virginia, on horseback. I hope to see him this week, and to assist in providing for him some one of our missionaries as a fellow traveller.

"Invariably yours."

"*Savannah, April* 29, 1822.

"My dear Wife,

"I returned six days ago from Liberty county, where I had a pleasant visit. The people were originally emigrants from Dorchester, near Boston, who removed first to Dorchester, South Carolina, and thence to Medway, Georgia. Like the Plymouth pilgrims, they brought a minister with them; and to this day, in their religious and social habits, there is much of the puritan simplicity. On the Sabbath they meet with great regularity and seriousness, and in the intermission retire to their little houses, prepared only for this purpose, where they take such refreshments as they have brought from home; none of them returning till the close of the afternoon service. These good people made me quite at home, many of them claiming to be old acquaintances with me, from my printed sermons, my connection with the Education Society, &c.

"Partly on account of unfavorable weather, and partly owing to my food in passing from house to house, I have been much oppressed with bilious stomach for two or

three weeks, so that I have fallen off in health, and have probably lost all that fine recruit of flesh to which I have before alluded. You must expect therefore, if it pleases God to return me to you, to see me just about as *plethoric* a man as heretofore. But that I am not seriously ill, you will perceive from the fact that I am now writing to you, having preached in a church *one hundred* feet by *eighty*. This church by a happy *accident*, (for no architect in our country produces the effect by skill,) is one of the easiest for a speaker, in the United States; and though not the most splendid, it is decidedly the most *elegant* building of the kind that I have seen. When I look at the assemblage of wealthy, worldly, fashionable hearers, who convene in this house, I tremble for my young brother to whom the charge of these precious souls is recently committed. O what a glorious field is here for the fervor and faithfulness of Baxter! I feel a strong confidence, however, that Mr. S—— is sound in faith and experience, and that his ministry will be blessed to this interesting flock.

"During my stay in this city, I have received the kindest attentions. Indeed the affectionate regard with which I have been treated by so many kind friends, while it will be to me a source of grateful recollections through life, has done much to abate the painfulness of my tedious absence. This absence I have deeply felt as an affliction from my heavenly Father, and I pray that the just and necessary stripes of his hand may make me a better and a happier man.

"Immutably yours."

The last of May Dr. Porter returned to New England. While passing through Long Island Sound, he thus notes his feelings:—

"June 4, 1822. After an absence of almost seven months, I see again the shore of my beloved native State,

Connecticut. The sight of those hills would interest me deeply, if they merely recalled the tender associations of my early childhood, and the labors and enjoyments of my pastoral life. The pleasure of such associations, having been the standing theme of poets, is not peculiar to men of any period or country, and is by no means to be identified with *religious* feeling. The love of country, like other social instincts, may be as strong in the rustic or the infidel, as in the philosopher or the Christian.

"But Connecticut has beauties to my eye independent of its being my native State. Its political and religious institutions, for two centuries, have given a character to its inhabitants, distinguishing it from any other community since the world began. Among no other people has republicanism existed in so much purity, and for so long a period. Connecticut was founded, not by the enterprise of ambition or avarice, but by an inextinguishable love of religion, and a steadfast attachment to the rights of conscience. Hence the institutions of the Gospel have been the foundation of all the institutions and habits of this highly favored people. Hence the industry, frugality, sobriety, simplicity, and at the same time, intelligence and independence of this people. As we approach this favored region, the manners of the social circle assume a correspondent aspect. In the hotel, in the packet, in the stage, there is a gentleness, sobriety, and decorum, which are a striking contrast to the clamor, and violence, and coarse profaneness that have too often afflicted my ears in the steam ship, and in other methods of travelling abroad."

Wearied with frequent and protracted separations from his family, his colleagues, and his labors, Dr. Porter resolved to commit himself into the hands of God, and abide the consequences of remaining in Andover. A

blessing seemed to attend this determination, and though for several successive years he scarcely passed a winter without an attack, more or less severe, of pleurisy, and though he sustained a constant struggle with infirmity, he was by "the good hand of his God upon him," enabled with comparatively brief interruptions, to continue the discharge of official duty. During this period, his history is merely the record of entire devotion to his sacred and responsible work. The vacations he improved in making short journies; sometimes in visiting Saratoga springs, sometimes in visiting his honored father, whose advanced age rendered it probable that death would soon terminate the offices of filial affection.

CHAPTER IX.

Appointed President of Theological Seminary—Answer—Increase of labors—Thinks of retiring from the Seminary—Requests leave of absence—Embarks for Charleston—Letter to Mrs. P. —Proceeds to St. Augustine—Letter to a friend in his family —Letter to a colleague—Letter to Mrs. P.—Return to Charleston—Thinks of going to Europe—Plan for the summer—Reflections on leaving Charleston.

In 1827, the guardians of the Theological Seminary deemed it expedient to add to the existing organization of its faculty, the office of President; the faculty having previously consisted of co-ordinate professors, each of whom in his department of instruction, performed the duty prescribed by the statutes; and in the government of the institution bore the part which his colleagues saw fit to assign him. When the presidency was established, Dr. Porter was selected for that station, by the guardians of the institution, with the cordial approbation of his colleagues. To the acceptance of the station, however, he felt very weighty objections; several of which are stated in his reply to the communication of the trustees, announcing his election.

"*The Rev. and Hon. the Trustees of Phillips' Academy.*

"Gentlemen,

"At your last meeting a communication was made to me, that your board had decided on the expediency of

having a President, as an officer of the Theological Seminary, and had appointed me to that office. For several years my own opinion has concurred with that of my colleagues, that such an officer would be found indispensable here; but it is no affectation of delicacy to say, that both my heart and my understanding incline me to shrink, with very serious misgivings, from undertaking the duties of this office myself.

"In the first place, it must be attended with *intrinsic difficulties*. These arise partly from the nature of the institution, and partly from our past habits.

"In the second place, there are difficulties connected with this subject, as it regards *myself*. For fifteen years, much of my time has been devoted to dry detail. To examine manuscript sermons, sentence by sentence, with a critical eye; and to do this for a whole class, as I did for eight years, or for half a class, as I have done for the remaining seven years, is a work adapted to exhaust the strength and spirits, in no common degree. So indispensable to the best habits of the students is this labor, that I do not mention it as a burden. It has been my duty to do it, though with the unavoidable sacrifice of studies which I have ardently wished to pursue; and which I have hoped from year to year that I might find opportunity to pursue, under better advantages than before. It is with inexpressible reluctance then, that I think of engaging in new duties, which must consist very much in the details of business, and must involve me in various and multiplied interruptions and cares. This reluctance I frankly confess is much increased by an apprehension that my health may prove inadequate to the task proposed. This leads me to say,

"In the third place, there are difficulties in making the past duties expected of me compatible with an adequate attention to those now proposed. It would be unwise in

me to think of sustaining a greater *amount* of labors than have belonged to me hitherto. I should be unwilling too, that any considerable portion of these labors should be permanently transferred to my colleagues, with the great duties already resting on them. I know that the trustees have the most generous feelings on this whole subject, and will be ready to give necessary relief as far as circumstances will permit. My colleagues also, during present embarrassments, are disposed to render every aid in their power; and greatly as I have reason to confide in their judgment, I cannot lightly regard the opinion and wish of these brethren that I should accede to the proposed arrangements of the trustees.

"After this frank disclosure of my views, gentlemen, I wish to do, or at least try to do, my duty. To the interests of this sacred seminary, my heart is devoted with an undivided attachment. No object on earth can supersede this in my regard. If I may be instrumental in any humble measure of promoting the purposes of its venerable founders, in aiding to raise up an able and holy ministry for the church, it will be the consummation of my wishes. If the trustees continue to think that I ought to engage in the service assigned me,—relying on their candor, and counsel, and prayers; on the co-operation of my beloved colleagues; and above all on the blessing of Him who can 'increase strength to them that have no might,'—I will do it.

"With great respect, I am, gentlemen,

"Yours &c. E. Porter."

Though the trustees very kindly afforded Dr. Porter all the relief which circumstances would permit, still his responsibility was much augmented by his acceptance of the presidency. Besides the duties of that office, he continued his public lectures, and his attendance on certain other exercises in his department. This increase of duties una-

voidably encroached upon favorite studies, and especially on the completion of lectures which he deemed indispensable to his highest usefulness in the field of labor assigned him—lectures, whose plan was comprehensive, and in some respects original, and the execution of which, had its author's life been spared to accomplish his designs, would have laid the department of sacred rhetoric under greatly increased obligations to his talents and industry.

In the autumn of 1829, the state of Dr. Porter's health again awakened fearful apprehensions respecting the consequences of his continuing through the winter in New England. He now thought, indeed, very seriously of resigning his connection with the seminary, fearing that his continuance in office might prove injurious to its interests. The expediency of his retirement he submitted to several friends, from whom, especially those connected with the seminary, he received the reply, that often as his labors were interrupted by illness, they could not be dispensed with, and he must consent to continue them. Having become satisfied that he ought, at least for a season, to remain in office, he deemed it his duty once more to ask leave of absence, hoping that he might again derive from a southern climate, benefit similar to that he had experienced in former years. In his communication to the trustees, he says—"When I did this in 1822, it was with the settled purpose of never repeating the experiment in any emergency. But viewing as the probable result of that experiment all that I have been able to accomplish for the last seven years, it is a serious question whether I am not called to change that purpose. If I regard the views of some more competent than myself to judge in the case, I must think it *may* be my duty. That it *will* be so, I cannot decide till I shall have seen what influence October may have on my health. Reluctantly as I should yield to the conviction that I am called to leave home,

should I come to that conviction, I request that the trustees, in addition to all their past testimonies of kindness, will give me leave of absence, or authorize their committee to act provisionally, as the case may require."

This request of Dr. Porter the trustees readily granted; and he embarked for Charleston in October. In a letter to Mrs. Porter, dated Charleston, Dec. 31, 1829, we find the following reflections :—

"In writing this date, two thoughts rush upon my mind. One is, that it is the birth-day of her whom I address, and whose interests, affections, trials, and enjoyments, have now for thirty-two years been identified with my own; and on whom too, for many of these years, I have depended for a thousand assiduous attentions to my comfort under many infirmities. The other is, that this is the last day of another year. Through all my severe sufferings from sickness, amounting often, as you know, to agony of pain, I have never considered myself to be near my end, so as to look upon speedy death as a probable event; yet the close of a year is attended with a set of reflections now, to which I was a stranger at the age of thirty-five.—Those whom I called *fathers* when I entered the ministry are gone. So are many of those whom I called brethren. So are many of my associates in college and early boyhood; many of these too who were robust men, standing strong in the vigor of unimpaired health, long since I was an invalid. Indeed, of the strong and healthy among my early acquaintance, quite as great a proportion are dead, as of the slender and infirm. But when I reflect how many who were born since myself, are gone into eternity, the close of a year reminds me that my remaining days cannot be many. O that they may be more unreservedly devoted to God, than my past days have been!"

After a few weeks' stay in Charleston, he proceeded to St. Augustine to spend the remainder of the winter. To a friend resident in his family, he wrote from the latter place as follows:—

"*St. Augustine, Feb.* 10, 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"As some acknowledgment to a gracious Providence for his kindness to me, and as a debt which I owe to your goodness, I mean to write as long a letter as I can before the mail closes, and if I can make out a long one, shall address half of it to you and half to Mrs. Porter. I have delayed this, till the weekly mail arrived, in hopes of something from Andover, but received nothing except the Journal of Humanity. I am not, however, so absolutely at leisure here as you might suppose, since enough of my old friends follow me with their kind regards, to give me a pretty ample correspondence. Last week I received eleven letters by one packet schooner, besides bundles, small and large, of pamphlets, &c. The answers, to a pretty large amount, must go by to-day's mail, making a busy day, besides what I have before done, for I write much longer letters here, than I could if I were at home.

"St. Augustine as a place, is perfectly unique. Its ancient fortress is said to be the largest and most complete work of the kind in North America. Since the exchange of flags, this structure so imposing in aspect, is going to decay, the few United States' troops here being quartered in barracks the other side of the town. The old Spanish houses with massive walls and doors, remind one of gone-by ages, when feudal habits made every dwelling a military castle. The orange groves, intermingled with all the buildings, and really covering the whole surface, give an air of enchantment to the scenery. Its vicinity to the tropical regions, and the Gulf stream, are said to contribute

much to the softness and uniformity of the atmosphere. The soil is so absorbent, that water is *seldom* seen in the streets, and mud *never*.

"I suppose that if the benefits of this climate were understood, some thousands of northern invalids would resort to it in winter, provided that good accommodations were furnished. A good hospital, and good private boarding houses—with some inland establishment for country air, would make the place much preferable as a resort to those who need a southern winter, to any thing that can be found in Europe, or the West Indies.

The three first weeks of my residence here, we had one rainy and one cloudy day. The rest were clear, soft, invigorating. At the end of the fourth week, we have had a storm from N. and N. E. Thermometer 46 to 56,—generally it has ranged from 60 to 70.

"The population of St. Augustine, about 1,000 or 1,200, is a mixed race. A few Spaniards, one half Americans, and the rest Minorcans brought hither by the English as colonists, while they held the country. Among the latter, who again are mixed with Greek blood, you now and then see, on a peasant's body, a noble Greek head. The natives are Catholics, generally poor and ignorant. We intend making some serious efforts this winter to break the fetters of superstition in which they are bound.

"See that I hear often from the 'Sacred Hill.'

"Affectionately."

Dr. Porter's residence at St. Augustine, it would seem, was beneficial even beyond his anticipations, enabling him, besides preparing occasional communications to the senior class, for whose instruction he was yet chiefly responsible, to prosecute with happy results his own studies. In a letter to one of his colleagues, he remarks, with reference to his mode of employing his time:—

"The books which I brought out from my own library have been a great comfort to me. Some of them which have stood for several years on my shelves, I have found no time to read till this winter. I am making some progress too in writing. My plan of study, so far as I can study, is 1st. Reading, as above. 2. Writing lectures or letters to the senior class on preaching. 3. Do. on eloquence, that is, rewriting and enlarging what was unfinished on the subject. 4. Making a book smaller than the Analysis, on reading, &c., for high schools and academies. 5. Abridging Owen on Spiritual Mindedness. My hopes are apt to outrun my capabilities, and how far I may go in executing this plan, Providence will determine, and time disclose. I am compelled to devote most of my time to exercise, and it would amuse my old friends to see me walking with no additional clothing, even about my neck, or mounted on an Indian pony, with my feet almost reaching the ground."

In this connection we quote a few remarks from a communication on this subject, subsequently made to the Visitors of the seminary :—

"My plan on leaving home last autumn, was to winter if possible in Carolina, and regularly send to the senior class whatever I might write for their instruction. Accordingly I took with me a trunk of such books as I should most need, many of which I had found no time to read at home. After I went to St. Augustine, a measure which was deemed indispensable by my medical advisers, a part of my plan was frustrated. The regular and safe conveyance to Andover of letters and manuscripts was cut off. Generally, however, I was enabled to spend several hours a day in study ; and besides maintaining an extensive correspondence, I prosecuted my professional reading to

some extent, completed a course of lectures on eloquence, which I had before begun, and extended my lectures on preaching by writing about five new ones on the general characteristics of sermons." He adds incidentally,—"to finish my whole plan of instruction on preaching, would require perhaps twenty or twenty-five additional lectures."

From the subjoined remarks found in the same communication, it appears that Dr. Porter was still doubtful whether duty did not require the dissolution of his connection with the seminary. "On account of the broken state of my health, during the past year, it has been with me, gentlemen, a subject of serious consideration whether it would not be best for the great interests with which I am connected, and for myself, that my official relation to the seminary should cease. I have concluded however, for the present, to leave this question to Providence, and to the guardians of these sacred interests; wishing to be expressly understood, that no consideration of personal regard to myself ought materially to affect its decision; at least so as to protract my relations here beyond what is required by the substantial welfare of the seminary."

To Mrs. Porter he writes from St. Augustine:—"I am almost afraid to tell you that during the past week, I wrote *four* lectures; an amount of writing which I have no remembrance of ever accomplishing before in so short a time. The truth is, that by the influence of this genial climate, and the blessing of God on my exact regimen, and abundant exercise in the open air, which I am here enabled to take almost without any interruption, I have been increasing in health more decidedly for the last three or four weeks, than at any other period since leaving home. This is a subject of common remark to those around me. They are ready to admire, while they admit

the fact, that my abstemious food and daily study, is more conducive to health than their own habits of eating and drinking *every thing*, and laboriously continuing to kill time by doing nothing. Among seventy or eighty invalids, I suppose the grand inquiry of three-fourths has been, 'what shall we eat and drink?' 'how shall we amuse ourselves?' Males and females have danced till midnight, and spit blood next morning. No one of them all, I presume, has been as much benefitted by the climate as myself. Yet I am a frail child of dust, and one week of such sickness as I experienced at Charleston, would make a wreck of me. For the present, however, it seems plainly providential that I should have come here, where I can do more, even for the time being, to serve the interests of our sacred seminary, than I could in Andover, with such health as I had a year ago.

"I am indeed a wonder to myself, when I look back and recollect the extreme agony that I have endured from rheumatism, colic, pleurisy, &c., and the violent influenzas by which my lungs have been often assailed; and yet find any stamina left, on which to build a hope that I may live a little longer, and do something for the church. O that I may consecrate to God alone, whatever strength it shall please him to allow me. Heretofore I do not remember the day, *through* which I was confined to my bed, in all my distracted health; but the day must come before long, when this frail body must 'lie down and rise not till the heavens shall be no more.' In the mean time I shall be an invalid. You will recollect that for the first half of my ministry at Washington, and with few exceptions for the last half, though far from robust, I braved the elements in the discharge of official duties, rarely turning aside for rain, or snow, or tempest. But this in our rough climate, I can never hope to do again, unless I abandon study and public responsibilities, and betake myself wholly to the

preservation of animal life; and then to what purpose should I live?"

From St. Augustine Dr. Porter returned to Charleston early in April, with health so much improved as to inspire the hope, that by a more protracted suspension of official labor than he at first contemplated, he might obtain great, and perhaps permanent relief. His views, which had undergone some change as to the nature of his maladies and the probability of lasting advantage from the use of proper means, he thus expresses in a letter to Mrs. Porter. "Since I left home, my infirmities have either changed, or become more fully developed. Being at present satisfied that I have no fixed disease, except the prostration of digestive organs, I think it worth a fair experiment whether I may not surmount this, so as to labor for the church a few years more. Just in proportion as I increase in health before next May, I shall feel inclined during the summer, to make efforts for a thorough restoration. As my life while it may be spared, and all my powers of usefulness are dedicated to God, I wish to do his will so far as I may learn it from the indications of his providence."

With the conviction above expressed, that he ought for a longer period to seek the restoration of his health, two plans offered themselves for his consideration: the first, to spend the summer in journeying in the northern States and in tilling his land; the second, to cross the Atlantic and spend the summer in Europe. The former of these he preferred, while his southern friends, among whom were several judicious physicians, advised to the latter. To Mrs. Porter he writes,—"I have sought divine guidance in this thing, and shall decide it as soon as possible. But my mind strongly preponderates to the decision against this long voyage. The sea, though useful to my chest, is clearly injurious to my gastric organs; and the thought of

mingling for four or five months among strangers, with my dyspeptic habits as to food, is repulsive. I am much inclined to conclude that travelling in the north, with a trial of the springs—perhaps a visit to Niagara and Quebec—perhaps, instead of these or besides them, ploughing at Andover, may do me more substantial good that a foreign voyage." In coming to the decision against crossing the Atlantic, he afterwards felt to the close of his life, that in answer to the many prayers offered in his behalf, he enjoyed divine direction. The vessel on board which he would have sailed, was burned by lightning on its outward passage.

When Dr. Porter took leave of Charleston, he believed as in 1822, that this was his final visit. His reflections, contained in a letter to Mrs. Porter, just before he left the city, are presented to the reader.

"In winding up my visit to this city for the last time, various reflections crowd upon my mind. Eight years ago, I left it with the full persuasion that I should never see it again. My settled purpose was to stay at home and trust Providence, come what might. This purpose I changed last autumn, most reluctantly, in compliance with the decided and united advice of friends—advice which I now (more fully than I did at the time) see to have been judicious. While it has rescued me for a season, from the cares and labors to which my strength was unequal, it has saved me from northern influenza, one severe attack of which would probably have finished the work of prostration, in my broken health. It has given me opportunity too for study, which I have prosecuted as far as was best, (perhaps farther,) though I have accomplished less than I wished; for in truth my love of study was never more intense, at any moment of my life, than it is now. Oh how much is yet unaccomplished of the work which I had

assigned myself to do before I die! God knows whether it is best I should do it; and to him I cheerfully leave all.

"His goodness to me is called up afresh to my recollection, in preparing to leave this city. Here he has given me friends, whose kind regards far exceed all my deserts. In walking for exercise, I have almost daily passed across the spot where a furious horse, having run away with a gig, dashed me headlong on the side-walk in 1820, and then trampled me under his feet. In another part of the city, I often see the well-frame, against which another frightened horse dashed the chaise of Mrs. O'Neale; and where she who had been an angel of mercy in ministering to me, when I had escaped from a similar disaster, found her own death. Oh that He, who by His own divine teaching, can enable his children to find 'sermons in stones, and good in every thing,' would help my ungrateful heart to receive the instruction proffered by these silent memorials of his goodness, and my own frailty."

CHAPTER X.

Resigns professorship of Sacred Rhetoric—Embarks for Charleston, accompanied by Mrs. Porter—Proceeds to Walterboro' and Columbia—Delivers course of lectures in Theological Seminary at C.—Return to Andover—Health but little improved—Again advised to go south—Resolves to remain in Andover—Sickness and death of his niece—His letter to her parents—His own sickness and death—Funeral—Nature of his disorder.

In pursuance of his general plan for the restoration of his health, Dr. Porter spent but a small part of the summer of 1830 in Andover. He performed little more of official duty than to revise the preparations for anniversary belonging to the rhetorical department, and to preside on that occasion. At the meeting of the trustees immediately following the anniversary, he tendered his resignation of the Professorship of Sacred Rhetoric.

"*To the Rev. and Hon. the Board of Trustees of Phillips' Academy.*

"Gentlemen,

"Since the office of a President in the Seminary was created in 1827, and I was called to undertake the discharge of its duties, I have deemed some new arrangement necessary as to the rhetorical department. This arrangement, delayed by circumstances beyond our control,

I think it indispensable should now be carried into effect. My reasons, given more at length in my communication of yesterday, briefly are, that the amount of duties in the two offices is greater than one man in the best health can adequately discharge; and because the impaired state of my health renders it especially inexpedient that I should longer sustain the responsibility of both.

"The professorship of *Sacred Rhetoric*, therefore, I beg leave to resign, and I do hereby resign, from and after the time that a new professor shall be elected in this department; and I farther wish to relinquish permanently, five hundred dollars of my annual salary, to aid in carrying the above arrangement into immediate operation.

"With great respect I am, gentlemen, yours &c.

"E. PORTER."

Sept. 23, 1830.

Notwithstanding his resignation, Dr. Porter continued to sustain the responsibility of giving lectures, and directing the studies of the rhetorical department, with the aid of temporary assistants appointed by the trustees, until Oct. 1832, when the vacant chair was filled by the election of Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, D. D. His protracted exemption indeed from official responsibilities in 1830, had so checked the progress of his maladies, and increased his bodily vigor, that he was enabled during the academical year which followed, to pursue the work of giving lectures to an extent which even exceeded his own expectations. In his report to the trustees in Sept. 1831, he remarks, that in consequence of repeated solicitations of the senior class, he had "given a greater number of *written* lectures than in any previous year." And in his report to the trustees for the year ending Sept. 1832, he informs them that he had designed, after delivering one course of his public lectures to the senior class in the

autumn, to devote one half of his time for the residue of the winter term to pastoral labor among the students, with a primary reference to the promotion of their personal piety. "I was the more settled in this purpose," he remarks, "from the full conviction that no other adequate means can be employed to anticipate and frustrate those deleterious influences, which are always liable to occur among a large collection of even educated and pious young men, who notwithstanding are very various in their temper and habits."——"It pleased God, however, that my hopes should be frustrated by sickness. After my lecturing was finished, the dreadful epidemic, which accompanied the intense severity of the winter, and to which many strong and useful men through the country, had already fallen victims, made its repeated attacks on me. The consequence was long continued confinement to my home, and great prostration, from which I am still but imperfectly recovered."

To Dr. Porter's friends as well as to himself, it was apparent through the summer of 1832, that his health was sinking; and as in former years, they now advised him to try the expedient to which he had often resorted—a removal to a southern climate. Averse to considering a subject so painful to his feelings, as separation for another winter from his beloved colleagues, and home, and still more beloved labors, he persisted in his determination to continue in Andover, until impelled to change it by the conviction, that a due regard to higher interests than his own demanded the sacrifice. With this conviction, having made the necessary arrangements, he embarked at Boston, early in October, accompanied by Mrs. Porter, whose attentions his situation rendered indispensable. He designed to proceed by way of Charleston to St. Augustine. At Charleston they went on board a vessel for St. Augustine, but after encountering severe head winds

for several hours, were compelled to disembark; when Providence, which had thus interposed, directed their course to the interior of South Carolina. In January they proceeded to Walterboro'. A residence at this place, on account of both its soil and atmosphere, they found highly conducive to his health; while their stay was rendered doubly pleasant, by the kind attentions of pious and intelligent friends, and by the existence of an unusually interesting state of religious feeling. While here he wrote a part of his very valuable Letters on Revivals. Having been solicited to deliver a course of Lectures in his department, to the students of the Theological Seminary at Columbia, he removed thither for that purpose. To this subject he thus alludes, in a letter to one of his colleagues:—"As to this concern, I had as long ago as December, an official request from the Directors of the Seminary to give a course of Lectures. After my dread of the ocean led me to decline going to Augustine, I consented to visit Columbia, as soon as I could think it conducive to my primary object, the confirmation of my health. It seems plain enough that what I can do *en passant*, and without injury to myself, to aid in forming the habits of this infant seminary ought to be done. All the classes attend my lectures, and they are disposed to make every arrangement, as to time, place, &c., for my accommodation. Indeed I shall not go an inch beyond what is safe and convenient to myself." The delivery of the lectures was followed by an urgent request for their speedy publication, especially those on Homiletics—a request which somewhat hastened the appearance of the volume published just before his decease. He left Columbia the 1st of May, returning by way of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Saratoga Springs, and reached Andover about the 1st of July. Though he accomplished much during this absence for the sacred cause to which his life was devoted, his health

was not permanently benefitted; owing perhaps partly, to his application to study and more public duties; but more, probably, to the progress of disease. For from this period the ravages of disease upon him, became more a subject of apprehension and of occasional remark among his intimate friends, than ever before. Still, without any decrease of energy perceivable except by his daily associates, he entered upon his official duties after his return, and continued to discharge them through the summer and autumn of 1833. The increased solicitude of his friends respecting the effect of the approaching winter upon him, induced them more urgently than formerly, to press his removal to a milder atmosphere. But his final resolution was adopted. To a state of exile, to which he had always compared his lot in his absences, he had been submissive because it was ordered by his heavenly Father. Still he could not believe it to be his duty again to separate himself, for more than half a year, from his family; nor could he consent that his beloved wife should be subjected to the complicated trials and anxieties she must endure, if his companion. He therefore determined to commit himself to divine protection—to remain in Andover, and abide the result. That he might secure as nearly as possible the advantages of a southern climate, he placed a large stove in the central entry of his house, by means of which about the same temperature might be preserved throughout the several apartments. Some expedient of this sort, in the existing state of his vital organs, was indispensable, as he could not endure respiration in an atmosphere below a middling temperature. This he found highly conducive to his comfort, as he was enabled by it to pass from one apartment to another without inconvenience. He was thus carried comfortably through the winter of 1833–34, and he flattered himself that he had made a discovery which would supersede the necessity, of another flight

from the frosts of New-England. But for some weeks previous to his last illness, it had been sufficiently obvious to his colleagues, and to Mrs. Porter, to render it a subject of remark, that he was failing. The progress of his disorder was perhaps accelerated, and his decease hastened by the sickness and death of a beloved niece, who had been for years a member of his family, and for months his almost constant attendant. Her disorder, an inflammation of the brain, from its commencement produced mental alienation, and rendered her the subject of extreme, and at times, of indescribable anguish. When in a few instances Dr. Porter entered her chamber, and witnessed her agony, he seemed to lose his self-possession. And her shrieks, which were occasionally heard in his study, produced agitation of his muscular frame, the discovery of which awakened anxious forebodings, lest the shock should prove too powerful for his enfeebled energies. These forebodings were not groundless; for though he attended to official calls, a prostration of bodily and mental vigor ensued, which was very apparent to those who daily saw him. Still he seemed to preserve his usual air of cheerfulness, and to inquiries respecting his health, he would answer—"much as usual."

Dr. Porter's niece referred to was Miss Lucy Irene Stone, a daughter of Rev. Timothy Stone of Cornwall, Connecticut. She had resided with her uncle from the age of eleven years, and had been adopted by him. Her intellect, under his direction, had been subjected to judicious discipline. But her sweetness of disposition, her unaffected piety, and her unwearied attentions to him, had rendered her peculiarly the object of his affection. He loved her as his own child. It was evident that in removing this young lady, the Lord had taken a friend on whom Dr. Porter was accustomed very much to lean. She had for months assisted him in transcribing papers, which

in the discharge of official duty he had occasion to prepare. Several of his most valuable manuscript Sermons are in her hand writing. She died, after two weeks' illness, March 12, 1834, aged nineteen years.

Dr. Porter's views of her character, and the strength of his attachment are thus expressed in a letter to her parents, announcing her decease. This letter, the last he ever wrote, serves equally to exhibit his spirit of submission under severe affliction.

"*Theol. Seminary, Andover, March* 15, 1834.

"Dear Brother and Sister,

"The agony is over.—Our beloved Irene was committed to the grave yesterday, P. M.—4 o'clock. Our family history of thirty-seven years, has no such event recorded in it before. Our house, which we have occupied twenty-two years, has never been a house of mourning before. Death has long shaken his dart at us, and now he has smitten the victim that no one would have anticipated—the healthiest member of the family, and almost of the neighborhood.

"Before giving the account of her sickness, I ought to say, that we have had the most satisfactory evidence, for some time past, that she was a real Christian. So strong was our hope of this, that when the disease began to assume the symptoms of a fatal termination, we had but one point of struggle, 'how can we spare her?' To herself we had no doubt that death would be an exchange of earth for heaven.

"The *general* pressure of the case has been more than I could have sustained under my frail health, but for the delightful evidence of her piety, and the solemn and steady belief that 'as for God, his way is perfect.' We bowed down, day by day, and said, 'Father, let this cup pass;—nevertheless, not as *we* will but as *thou* wilt.' While we

thus gave her up to God, many recollections and associations respecting her were too interesting to be grouped together and dwelt upon—but have been postponed to come up separately and successively, as we can bear them. I have repeatedly said to my wife, as an encouragement to take pains with Irene in her training for usefulness—that I considered her as the most promising young lady of her age in my acquaintance. This estimate is not a partial one, but coincides with the sentiment of respectable people around us, now and heretofore.

"During the past winter, as she has recited to me Beattie on Truth, &c., I have been delighted with the clearness and strength of her reasoning powers; and her capacity to repeat, in most appropriate language, every chief thought, in a lesson read, or a sermon she heard preached. The particulars of her sickness, which I intended to give, I must now leave to Mrs. Porter and her brother, as I am too much exhausted to use my pen more at present.

"Your afflicted brother,

"E. Porter."

The first distinct intimation which Dr. Porter's family recollect, that he was conscious of an unfavorable change in his health, was given a few days after the death of his niece, to one of his colleagues, who had called to tender his sympathy. "Brother Stuart," said he, in an unusually solemn tone, as the family were seated around the supper table, "I have never felt before that prostration of all my vital powers, which I have felt lately." Professor Stuart mentioned his late affliction as a sufficient cause for his depressed health. "I have known," Dr. Porter replied, "what affliction was before, and know its effects upon the animal system, but I never before was so weak that I found a serious difference between the weight of a *full* and an *empty* sugar bowl." As Mrs. Porter who had

been for several days confined by illness induced by watching and fatigue, became able to resume the care of her husband, he seemed to revive, and his friends were inspired with the hope that he might regain his usual vigor. But their hopes were soon clouded. He would occasionally ask for articles of diet, about which he had always been indifferent. Some little singularities in his conversation began also to be noticed, which they feared, though they were unwilling to admit, might betoken mental aberration. His last official act, performed just a week before his death, was the writing of the usual recommendatory certificate for the senior class, preparatory to their receiving license to preach. From the commencement of his illness, it was thought advisable on account of his peculiar situation, that friends should be permitted to see him but little. For the following particulars of the closing scene of his life, the compiler is indebted to Mr. T. D. P. Stone, brother of the young lady above mentioned, and an adopted son of Dr. Porter.

"Nothing of special interest occurred in his case until Thursday, April 3d, excepting that he cupped himself several times, as he used to do, in attacks of pleurisy; and that he utterly refused to have a physician called. On Thursday, the annual State Fast, the family physician was called in, almost against Dr. Porter's will. He described his symptoms well, but there was a languid indiscrepancy about his conversation that produced alarm. This grew worse and worse. At length lethargy came on, interrupted at intervals by severe pain in his right leg, which was much swollen. By request of the physician, other medical counsel was sought, but his case was pronounced utterly hopeless—*he must die.* For us, nothing remained, but to soothe his pains, and gaze upon his clear expressive countenance, soon to be pale in death. Day after day we stood in awful suspense. We could

not converse with him, for his mind was overwhelmed by disease. Yet in his wanderings there was richness and eloquence—there was no littleness of thought. He seemed to grasp the world. His sentences might commence with a reference to his pains, to faculty business, or to family concerns, and end with the conversion of the world, the safety of the republic, or the millennium, which the benevolent enterprises of the day to which his heart was unalterably attached, seem to harbinger.

"The Sabbath previous to his death, a barber was sent for to shave him. Though he had been quite lethargic for some time, and seemed unconscious of what was passing, he opened his eyes as the barber was preparing to leave the room, and said, 'Mr. ———, I don't know but you have conscientious scruples about taking pay on the *Sabbath*—if so, just let it be, and D——— will call and pay you to-morrow.' In the evening, he raised a little blood, which he appeared to notice as an indication of increasing inflammation. Soon after, as Mrs. Porter was passing through the room, he called her to his couch and said, 'take the watch and sit down by me'—evidently wishing her to ascertain whether his pulse indicated a change. His sentences were afterwards generally broken off before they were completed, and gradually became mere monosyllables. Dr. Woods called to see him a few hours before he died, and during his stay he said 'yes' and 'no' in answer to questions respecting some medicine, and never spoke again.—Two or three of the last days of his life, he had frequent chills, which seemed like the struggles of death, and could be removed only by enveloping him in hot blankets.—Mrs. Porter's voice and even her presence, generally excited him so much that it was deemed prudent for her to be away from him much of the time. But during his last chill, his wonted recollection seemed to return, and he could no longer be denied her presence;

and when she came at his call, and stood by him and smoothed his pillow, her kind attentions were as usual received with evident delight. This appearance was however but momentary—a dense cloud again shrouded his intellect, which was not removed till dissipated by the visions of eternity. Monday evening the family retired, without expectation of his speedy dissolution, leaving him in charge of two of his beloved pupils. They were soon aroused, however, by the painful intelligence that he seemed in the agonies of death. His vital energies became exhausted, and his spirit took its flight about *two* o'clock, Tuesday morning, April 8th, 1834."

The funeral was attended the Friday following his decease, in the chapel of the theological seminary. Most of the trustees and visitors of the institution, and a numerous body of the clergy, united in the last tribute of respect to the remains of one whom living, they loved, and dead, they lamented and revered. Among those assembled, and we may not doubt, among the most sincere mourners, was the venerable founder of the professorship the deceased so long, and so usefully filled—a man whom Dr. Porter had regarded from his first residence at Andover, as a father, and whom he had invariably found a judicious, faithful, and munificent friend. A funeral discourse was preached by Rev. Dr. Woods, from John xvii. 4.—*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* In accordance with his wish, distinctly expressed, his body was interred in a perfectly plain manner in the chapel cemetery. Over the grave, a beautiful monument of white marble, in the form of an obelisk, has been erected by the American Education Society.

It may be proper to add, in reference to the nature of Dr. Porter's disease, that a post mortem examination, instituted at the request of the attending physician, disclosed

the fact, that his lungs had to a considerable extent become incapable of inflation. One who was present remarked, "it is matter of astonishment, that with such a state of lungs, he could have breathed at all." Most of his friends were surprised at the result of this examination; the more so, because very distinguished physicians in various parts of the country, had with great unanimity expressed the belief that his lungs were not the subject of organic disease. Within the year previous to his decease, he wrote to his wife from Saratoga Springs, that several skillful physicians whom he there met, had deliberately examined his case, with the best facilities known to the profession, for ascertaining the state of his lungs, and had unanimously pronounced them sound. Only the autumn preceding his death, an eminent member of the medical profession, who had long been familiar with his symptoms, carefully examined his case, and confidently expressed the opinion that his lungs were not diseased. They were irritable, he informed him, and might in a course of years become locally affected. In the opinion of his physicians Dr. Porter was himself disposed to concur. It is indeed surprising, when we look at the result of the post mortem examination, and reflect that disease had doubtless been making progress many successive years, that he should have held out so long, and have accomplished so much. His strict observance of dietetic rules, his peculiar caution respecting personal exposure, which by many of his friends was attributed, if not to whim, at least to extreme solicitude not demanded by the actual state of his health, appear to have been only a judicious conformity of his habits to the dictates of duty; appear indeed to have been indispensable to his usefulness, and even to the continuance of his life for a single year.

CHAPTER XI.

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER.

Intellectual endowments happily proportioned—Effect of infirmities on his intellectual habits—Mental characteristics—Eminently qualified to act as umpire in cases of difficulty—Mode of preparing to write—Qualities as a writer—Feeling of responsibility as a literary man—Letter to Robert Hall.

Single traits of intellect are often so developed as to secure for their possessor the reputation of transcendent genius—a reputation which he easily retains, if called only into the sphere of action for which he seems especially formed; but which he as easily loses in any other department of exertion. It was not the predominance of any one intellectual endowment which contributed chiefly to the reputation of Dr. Porter. This was the result rather of an harmonious assemblage of those qualities, which with judicious cultivation most contribute to extensive and permanent usefulness. Justice requires that we view his intellectual character as a *whole*, every part of which bears minute inspection, and is contemplated with pleasure. In attempting to delineate his intellectual developments, therefore, the writer cannot hope for the advantage, in such cases often enjoyed, of being able to impart attractiveness to the portraiture, by presenting

certain features in bold relief. As an offset to this disadvantage, however, it is grateful to know that the delineation, if just in its proportions and coloring, may be contemplated with as much profit, as if its characteristics were adapted to strike us with awe, or overwhelm us with astonishment.

During his course of classical and professional study, Dr. Porter gave evidence of intellectual endowments which augured distinguished usefulness in the sacred calling to which he was devoted. The correct habits of his early life were subsequently nurtured and matured. It ought to be said however, that his intellectual character, especially while resident at Andover, was very much modified by bodily frailty. While in many respects his infirmities were a serious hindrance to his improvement, they compelled him to acquire entire self-control. He was obliged to gain the habit of summoning his powers at pleasure, so as successfully to employ intervals in study, or wholly to abandon the performance of professional duty. To the effect of his infirmities in modifying his mental habits, he thus alludes in a letter to Mrs. Porter.——"I have dismissed all thoughts of going to Europe, after much reflection, and seeking as I trust divine guidance. Dr. D—— urged my going, especially as the crossing the Atlantic, he said, would be 'laying up my mind on the shelf,' till my body should gain more vigor. I told him that for twenty-five years, I had been from dire necessity driven into habits of *self-control*, so that I wind up my mind as I do my watch, and except when I am sick, require it to go or stop as I please; and that I should long ago have been in my grave, if I had been the victim of every subject that might happen to harass my thoughts. This, he said, was a power of which he had no conception from his own experience; and the reason that no more men attain this intellectual

discipline, I presume is, that they are happily exempt from that pressure of necessity by which I have been schooled into it, to preserve my life, or at least to make it of any account as to the ends of living."

Dr. Porter's mind was characterized by *comprehensiveness.* On the presentation of a subject, he seemed at once to grasp its bearings and results. Says one of his colleagues, "his power of entering into subjects, and comprehending their main points, was unusual." Hence his forecast, which rendered his judgment highly valuable respecting new plans of action, or proposed modifications of plans already existing. Aware that

> "We may outrun,
> By violent swiftness, that which we run at,
> And lose by over-running,"

Dr. Porter was accustomed always to act with circumspection. He formed a definite idea of any object he would attain; maturely considered the means of its attainment; and so digested his mode of operation, that while he failed not through lack of effort, he thwarted not his own designs and disappointed not expectation by ill-timed or excessive action.

With comprehensiveness, he united quick and acute discernment. Whether in argument, character, or conduct, he seemed to distinguish what was real from mere pretence, as if by intuition. And though he rarely allowed himself in passing judgment on the motives of others, he gave ample evidence of ability to do it with much correctness. The following catalogue of different sorts of men may amuse the reader, and illustrate Dr. Porter's habits of observation. To each of the classes one or more names are annexed as examples of the author's meaning. So far as the individuals are living, the names are of course omitted.

"*Ardent* and *amiable*,—advantage of this as to impulse, often counteracted by trips in judgment.

"*Ardent*, and *rash*,—*heady*, *unamiable*. ———.

"*Cool*, *steady*,—Father Day.*

"*Judicious*, *without genius*, *good common sense*,—Father Starr.

"*Judicious*, *with genius*. ———.

"*Steady*, *discreet*, *dry*,—Father Benedict.

"*Witty*,—Backus.

"*Steady*, *sagacious*, *patient*, *inflexible*,—S. J. Mills.

"*Heavy*, *cold*. ———.

"*Ambitious*, *capricious*, *weak*. ———

"*Public spirited* men, who are always willing to be on committees; but come to identify themselves so much with the public, as to feel uneasy when burdens are put on other shoulders than theirs.

"*Complaining* men, whose happiness consists so much in *finding fault*, that they would not with the same temper live a week, if put among perfect beings in Paradise. Something must be wrong to suit their humor. If the window is down, it must be up—if up, down.

"*Indecisive*, *timid*, *vascillating* men, who never can march on, because some danger is abroad.

"*Cunning*, *calculating* men, who aim at under-currents, and management; and generally end with a noose nicely adjusted about their own necks.

"*Double minded* men, who from policy or politeness are on *both* sides of all great and disputed subjects."

Dr. Porter's mind was vigorous and active. It is doubtless true, as remarked in a judicious sketch of his character in the Quarterly Register, that "in power of profound investigation on abstruse subjects, he was excelled by some other men." Of this he was himself aware. Yet there

* The father of President Day.

was no deficiency of mental vigor. "He mastered," continues the writer just quoted, "whatever he undertook."

Among his intellectual faculties, reason always presided. He was thus guarded against those influences of self-interest, of sympathy, and of caprice, which often greatly affect, and sometimes shape the decisions of men. Whether acting with reference to himself or others, he spontaneously recognized the principles of right, and cheerfully conformed his conduct to them. Few persons probably have been capable of forming a more impartial estimate of the talents and reasoning of men whose sentiments differed widely from their own. With a mind thus constituted, Dr. Porter was eminently qualified to act as umpire in cases in which were involved conflicting interests. His conclusions in such cases, being the obvious deductions of impartiality from facts developed, were ordinarily received with favor by those who were willing to yield to the dictates of justice. The results of his deliberations would bear the strictest scrutiny. "If one wanted an opinion, that would be likely to abide the test of events," says one of his colleagues, "of all the men whom I have known, he was peculiarly the man to give such an opinion, on all subjects with which he was acquainted. The secret of this was the consultation of sober reason, and the refusal to be dictated by mere sympathies." "It was by no means uncommon," says another of his colleagues, "for those who were associated with him in important public transactions, to distrust their own opinion, as soon as they found it different from his." The same endowments which rendered him singularly discreet and safe as a counselor, rendered him judicious and acceptable as a reprover.

The self-control which Dr. Porter acquired from the discipline to which he subjected his intellectual powers, he made essentially serviceable in preparing for his writ-

ten performances. It was his practice before he commenced writing on any subject, fully to collect and digest his materials. In doing this he made free use of his pen, often sketching his trains of thought so minutely as to embrace almost every idea he wished to express. He was consequently enabled to prosecute his writing when ready to commence it, with much facility and despatch; and often to present the first draught with a degree of completeness, both as to thought and diction, which rendered revision a light labor;—a remark especially true of his later performances. To this practice of premeditation, we ought doubtless to attribute not only much of the method and perspicuity which characterise his trains of reasoning, but much also of the unusual simplicity and elegance of his style. These latter qualities of composition are often, indeed, supposed to be the result of extreme labor in revision. That they are frequently and perhaps generally so, may be true; but from ample opportunity to inspect the manuscripts of Dr. Porter, the writer is convinced that these qualities in his composition, were at least in an equal degree, the result of the practice above alluded to, in connection with his innate power of nice discrimination. In those cases where he thought it necessary to amend his written performances, the amendments far more frequently respect the sentiment than the expression. To simplicity and elegance, he united precision in the use of words, attained by an extensive acquaintance with the best models of composition, and a minute observation of the power of language. His style is also characterised by vivacity, and often by strength. But its most prominent characteristic is *purity*. His words not only belong to our language, but they are conformed to its idiom; and to the standard of established usage.

The cultivation of style Dr. Porter was of course obliged in his official capacity, to make a subject of study.

And to personal improvement in this matter, he doubtless was urged to some extent by official considerations; but more, we may believe, by a desire to prevent the encroachments upon his native tongue, of curiosity, of pedantry, of caprice, and other causes which operate to vitiate a language. His sentences were uniformly well arranged, perspicuous, and harmonious; and in the whole structure of his written performances, there was an obvious conformity to the rhetorical canons he had occasion to urge upon others. Says the writer of the sketch of Dr. Porter's character, in the Quarterly Register, already alluded to, "So far as the nice balance of sentences, the harmonious collocation of them, and the selection of apt and beautiful words are concerned, he was rarely ever excelled. There was no heterogeneous agglomeration of epithets or of sentences, no verbiage, no confusion of metaphors. Every thing was distinct, clear, finished. We have the same associations respecting the perfection of his style, which we have with that of Professor Playfair, Thomas Campbell, and Professor Frisbie. His words fell on the ear like the music of Handel. In his best discourses, the extreme polish was not apparent. The order was so logical, and the sentences were so accurately adjusted, that we never thought of the indefatigable attention which had been bestowed on them. The sentiment was so clearly and precisely expressed, as to occupy the whole attention of the hearer. It found a lodgment in the inmost soul."

Dr. Porter's imagination was more chaste than lively. Yet passages exist, especially in his sermons, which exhibit much power in moral painting. Whatever picture his fancy delineated was justly proportioned, and correctly colored. His figures were natural, appropriate, expressive, and often striking. His illustrations were marked by originality, and were employed with powerful effect. Few men, indeed, have been able to impress a truth on others

more forcibly, by the use of apposite and striking illustration. His appeals to the conscience, were simple, direct, and pungent; and though by the blessing of God, they often reached the heart, and caused the sinner to tremble, they were so free from asperity, and so clearly dictated by benevolence, as never to inflict a wound on the most delicate sensibility.

A reference to almost any page of Dr. Porter's later publications, especially those relating to the department of sacred rhetoric, will show the reader that he was accustomed, with much minuteness, to designate emphatic words, in preparing his writings for the press. In carrying this notation so far, he deviated from common usage; yet with obvious advantage, if not to every reader, at least to those who are called to read aloud for the gratification of others.

Dr. Porter felt deeply the responsibility of the relation, which, in common with other literary men, he sustained to the republic of letters. From this responsibility he plead no exemption on the ground of multiplied official engagements, or bodily infirmities. Whatever of personal or of professional influence he could exert to chasten and elevate literary taste, to improve our language, in a word to enrich and adorn our national literature, he felt himself imperiously bound to exert. To this feeling ought to be attributed much of the peculiar concern he ever manifested, that his diction, his style, the whole character of his literary performances, should be unexceptionable. He lamented the lack of "literary patriotism" manifested by many of our professed scholars. From sundry documents among his papers, it would seem that there was a period when he ardently desired that a permanent association of the officers of our literary institutions might be formed, to meet statedly, for the discussion and adoption of measures

connected with the highest literary interests of the country. The ground of this desire was the expectation that such a convention would tend to benefit primary schools, to elevate and render uniform the standard of literary and professional education; especially that it would tend to preserve our language from innovation both in respect to its structure and pronunciation. A convention was called, indeed, in 1818, when an association was organized, and subjects were assigned to several individuals, upon which they were expected to present dissertations at the next annual meeting. Dr. Porter was requested to prepare a dissertation on the "Pronunciation of the English Language." In pursuance of his appointment he addressed the following letter to the Rev. Robert Hall.

"Reverend and respected Sir,

"In a recent letter from my friend Mr. Lord of New York, he informs me that while in England, he had the pleasure of an interview with you; and that he took the liberty of proposing an occasional exchange of letters between you and myself. This proposal is highly satisfactory to me, though indeed I have felt some uneasiness from the apprehension that your politeness may have assented to it at the expense of your convenience; especially as Mr. Lord says your health is quite imperfect.

"The truth is, that while my time and strength are inadequate to my present engagements, there are reasons why I deem it important to have direct access to the best sources of information on your side of the Atlantic, respecting certain subjects in which I am interested. That I may not oppress you too much at the threshhold, I will mention but one of these subjects now, not because it deserves priority for its intrinsic weight, but because it happens to be urgent at this time.

"To make myself intelligible will require some preface.

The students of the theological seminary with which I am connected, and the constitution of which Mr. Lord put into your hands, are graduates from eleven different colleges in the United States. These colleges were generally established on Christian principles, and all but two are under Evangelical influence. Some of them are handsomely endowed, and furnished with able professors, and with other means of giving to the students a liberal education. In several of them, I presume the classical course is such as would be thought very respectable in the British Universities. But our institutions are comparatively in their infancy. Only two of our colleges, Harvard and Yale, are a century old, and most of the others are of recent origin. Between these seminaries, many of them hundreds of miles distant from others, there has heretofore been almost no intercourse. That their requisitions for the admission of students, and their classical pursuits generally, were very various, and in some cases very defective, could not fail to be perceived by us, in receiving the graduates of all. For several years I have contemplated as a desirable event, a meeting of the heads of these colleges, with a view to raise the standard of American literature; and the last spring had the pleasure of seeing such a convention formed in Boston, on the plan of a permanent, annual meeting, which promises much utility. The immediate objects of attention will be to raise our primary schools to a higher literary character, to increase the attainments requisite for admission of students into the colleges, to produce a more uniform orthography of the learned languages, and of the English; and better editions of the classics.

"With reference to the next meeting of this convention, I wish, through the aid of some English friend, to gain some information respecting the established *pronun-*

ciation of the English language, in Great Britain. As far as the pulpit is concerned, this subject, though not of primary interest, is still of some importance. Since the publication of Sheridan's Dictionary, and afterwards of Walker's, the diversity of pronunciation among our preachers has been so great as to render what is reputable in one State or district, peculiar in another. The body of common people, and of the educated too, in New-England, still cleave to the habits of the last century, with a partial conformity to Walker; while a few have gone into extremes of innovation. Perhaps the best general rule for a preacher on this subject is so to speak that his *manner* shall not divert the attention of the hearers from his *matter*. On Christian as well as national principles, a greater uniformity, than at present exists among us, is desirable.

"Now Sir, though I think it incumbent on our youth to study the great models of English style, especially till we shall have produced Miltons and Addisons of our own, I can by no means think it becoming in a Christian minister to speak so as to be a barbarian at home, from a fancied or real conformity to the usages of a London theatre. Still it would seem to be both important and practicable that the great family who speak the English tongue, should speak it with a good degree of uniformity.

"With these views, I wish to know what general changes there have been on your side, in English pronunciation, within the last fifty years. What is the best standard at present, and to what extent adopted by respectable men, especially in the pulpit. I am aware that to answer inquiries of so general a nature, and on such a subject, may be unpleasant to you; but in that case, I hope you will have the goodness to name some gentleman to whom I may apply for the requisite information. Or should it be convenient for you to make the request of some one, in my

behalf, it would still more oblige me. The purpose for which I need such a communication requires that I should receive it, if possible, by January next; as the subject is to undergo a regular discussion in our next literary congress.

"It would give me great satisfaction to know more than I do respecting the Dissenting churches of your country; particularly, the qualifications for individual membership; what bond of union exists among churches or ministers; in what manner and by whom young men are authorised to preach before ordination; where are the principal seminaries, literary and theological; their endowments, libraries, number of instructors, course and period of study. What proportion of the Dissenters are Unitarians, and what proportion Calvinists?

"Any information which you may at any time find it convenient to give me respecting any one, or all of these particulars, will confer on me a favor.

"Any things in our humble style of authorship, which you would have the curiosity to read, I shall be happy to forward, if you will designate any one at Liverpool or elsewhere, to whom they shall be consigned. I could send, for example, if you have not seen them, Dr. Trumbull's History of Connecticut. Allen's American Biographical Dictionary, and several volumes of the Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine.

"Our elegant new Chapel, erected by the munificence of William Bartlet, Esq., was dedicated to God last week. I will send the sermon, and a catalogue of the seminary, when I shall have received your direction as to the medium of conveyance.

"If the aspect of this letter should not be repulsive to your feelings, I shall hope to receive an answer, as soon as may be consistent with your convenience. At the same

time I cannot expect nor desire, that the claims of a new correspondent should supersede your more important engagements.

"With great respect for your character, permit me, Reverend and dear Sir, to subscribe myself your friend and brother in the holy ministry,

"E. PORTER."

"The Rev. Robert Hall."

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Remarks—Reason why Dr. Porter kept no diary—Resolutions—Means of growth in piety—Systematic in cultivating spiritual feelings—Characteristics of his piety—Faithfulness in discharging duty; illustrations—Qualifications as a counselor and reprover—Letter—Susceptibility of enjoyment heightened by piety—Testimony of his colleagues—Concluding remarks.

The most impressive exhibition of Christian character is that which is furnished by the conduct, in the various relations and circumstances of life. The heart which is unaffected by the precepts of Christ, is often moved by contemplating the traits of his character manifested in his intercourse with men;—his obedience, in yielding to the claims of parental authority, and of the divine law; his benevolence, in labor and sacrifice for the good of his enemies; his zeal, in overcoming obstacles interposed by indolence and depravity; his faithfulness, in pointedly reproving sin; his devotional spirit, in frequent seasons of communion with God; his faith, in unwavering confidence in the divine promises and government; his humility, in not seeking great things for himself; his forgiveness, in freely remitting the transgressions of the penitent offender; his meekness, in mildly bearing insult and abuse; his sympathy, in ministering to the distressed; his frugality,

in the use of the comforts of life; his prudence, in avoiding needless collision with ignorance and prejudice; his discretion, in the peculiar appositeness of his admonitions, counsels, and encouragements; his self-control, in repressing anger and other sinful feelings; his holiness, in irreproachable demeanor; his entire devotedness, in a uniform concentration of his energies on the single object of glorifying his Father in the salvation of souls. For the same reason that these traits of character in our Saviour were peculiarly impressive, their likeness is so in his followers. There is no hazard, then, in saying that no exhibition of Christian character is so instructive as that which is manifest in the daily deportment. It produces conviction where reason and argument have spent their strength in vain. Still it is often gratifying to be made acquainted with the *feelings* of those, whose Christian course has been distinguished for activity, consistency, and usefulness. It is indeed commonly expected that the biographer of such an individual, will be able, from the record of private exercises, to inform his readers what was the daily course of discipline to which that individual subjected his heart, and what were his peculiar spiritual trials and conquests. To many it may seem matter both of surprise and regret, that no record of this kind has been left by Dr. Porter, and that comparatively little illustrative of his religious feelings can be gathered from his manuscripts. This is true even of his familiar letters. Though they were always serious, and full of interest to those to whom they were addressed, they contain but infrequent and brief allusions to his own spiritual exercises. His journals, while absent, were mere memoranda kept for the gratification of Mrs. Porter, and for the most part, confined to the narration of incidents which she would be interested to know, but which could not be conveniently mentioned in his letters. Yet the fact that we are left to infer his

Christian character chiefly from his daily deportment, must not be attributed to apathy, or carelessness, or indolence. The reasons are distinctly stated by himself. To Mrs. Porter, some three or four years before his death, he thus writes:—

"In the letters which I have written to you, my dear wife, during the protracted and painful separation which I hope is now drawing to a close, probably you may have thought it strange, that I have so seldom alluded to my own religious enjoyments or trials. You are entitled to a brief explanation from me on this subject.

"If I had any experimental knowledge of religion during my college life, it was not as I now believe, till the latter part of it. I had, indeed, a hope from the age of twelve, but it was faint for several years, and I think was groundless. A sickness in my third summer at college, I recall as the probable instrument, under God, of my first thorough religious exercises.

"When I was a theological student, I kept a diary, in which I noted various things respecting the spiritual condition of my heart; and this brief journal I continued through my candidate life, and in the early stages of my ministry. But all these papers I destroyed long ago; and for many years past I have not attempted any thing of the kind in regular form. The truth is that the multiplication, and the indiscreet *publication* of religious private journals, gradually gave me a distaste for compositions of this sort. Their object avowedly is, either the benefit of the writer, or that of others. As to myself, the exercises of my own mind, that are sufficiently pleasant or painful to be the subject of record, I can and must *remember* without any such help. The *habits* of my mind, not occasional frames and emotions, constitute my spiritual character; and these I cannot forget while my consciousness and memory

remain. Certain solemn resolutions of my own, made when my heart has been most awakened and strengthened by communion with God, I have found it useful to write, that I might read them often. But to write all that passes in my mind, for my *own subsequent perusal*, would be little short of downright trifling.

"If the benefit of *others* is the object of a private journal, then it seems to me a case of no small delicacy, for an individual to presume that a disclosure of what passes in his own bosom, will be important to his fellow men. That disclosure does not profess to be complete—it cannot pretend to this. Does it then, exhibit the best or worst traits of the heart, or both in due proportion? Who can promise impartiality in adjusting these proportions, when self-love on one hand, or morbid melancholy on the other, holds the balance?

"Besides, however it may be with others, I cannot trust my heart in detailing its own *secret* exercises, with a view to their publication. I can preach to myself in my closet, with a fidelity and impartiality, that would probably be much impaired by the expectation that the sermon to myself will be published. The circumstances of Brainerd, and Martyn, and Samuel Pearce, form an exception to general rules: and I would not willingly forego the benefit which I have derived from the journals of these holy men."*

In a journal of earlier date, we find the following brief allusion to the same subject.—"A false taste prevails in the religious journals, especially of females, a species of composition, which, encouraged by a few examples of rare excellence, has swelled in modern times to a tedious excess. The writing of *private* exercises for *public inspec-*

* For some valuable remarks on the subject of this letter, see "Spirit of the Pilgrims," vol. iv. p. 428.

tion, is a work in which few are qualified to engage; and where it is done, I fear the record will not often correspond with the record of omniscience. Any appearance of ostentation on this subject is so repugnant to my feelings, that I have abstained from this species of composition even for my own improvement; lest some partial friend should hereafter expose to the public eye, what should have been confined to my own bosom." Referring to a lady in connection with these remarks, he writes:—"In the devotional parts of her diary which she read to me, I observed such phrases as 'sweet Jesus,' 'resting on his sweet bosom,' 'talking with Jesus,' &c.—which to say the least, seems to me, a *false religious taste*. The apostles themselves never approached their Master with such 'fondling epithets.' The longer I live, the more I estimate a Christian by his *humility*." The reader may find similar sentiments in Dr. Porter's sermon on "The Signs of the Times," p. 20.

The incidental mention of his early religious exercises in the letter above quoted, furnishes the only information on that subject to be found among his papers; the only information, indeed, to be obtained, except what is furnished by the following sentences from the preface to his abridgment of Owen on Spiritual Mindedness. "In the family of my father, under whose Christian influence it was the merciful allotment of Providence, that my childhood should be spent, there was a small library consisting mostly of religious books. Those not strictly religious, were yet of useful tendency; so that until the age of twelve years, when my academical education began, I had never seen a single *bad* book. In this little paternal library was Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, the reading of which, on account of its simplicity, its rhetorical vivacity, its Christian fervor and pungency, made an indelible impres-

sion on my mind. This impression probably had more efficacy in the formation of my subsequent intellectual and moral habits, than any other means except parental influence."

From the commencement of his Christian course, his consecration to the service of God appears to have been entire. To what extent religious principle modified his actions in the discharge both of secular and religious duties, the reader may judge from the following *resolutions*, which are without date, and were obviously written at different times; probably, as intimated in the foregoing letter to Mrs. Porter, at times when the spiritual feelings of their author were "most awakened and strengthened by communion with God."

"I. THE CARE OF MY HEART.

"1. I will endeavor to keep the Sabbath holy. I will avoid conversation on worldly topics, and will not allow myself to think on any matter of common business, nor to read literary or professional books on this holy day.

"2. Special hindrances excepted, I will endeavor to maintain secret devotion statedly, at least twice a day.

"3. I will recollect every day that I am mortal.

"4. When any doubtful thing is to be done, I will ask myself, 'How will it bear the eye of God's omniscience?—how will it appear at the judgment?'

"5. I will endeavor to repress all undue regard to the praise or censure of men, by recollecting that GOD is a witness of all that I *do* or *think*.

"6. I will guard against *selfishness* as the 'abominable thing which the Lord hates.' When I detect myself in being especially pleased with a good action, because it is done by *myself;* or done by another through *my* advice, I will condemn the littleness of such feelings as below the

dignity of Christian principles. In all such cases, I will not speak of myself without some obvious reason; first, because it may cherish pride; and secondly, because it may exhibit the appearance of pride to others.

"7. I will consider myself as sacredly accountable to God for my improvement of the *influence* attached to my station; and will endeavor to distinguish betwixt the respect which is given to my *office*, and that which would in other circumstances be given to *myself*.

"II. CARE OF MY TONGUE.

"1. When I am angry I will never speak, till I have taken at least as much time for reflection as Athenodorus prescribed to Cæsar.*

"2. I will never talk *to* an angry man.

"3. I will not talk to a man intoxicated with strong drink.

"4. I will receive admonition from my friends with candor and thankfulness; and will be careful not to make a peevish reply to any one who gives me advice, though it be officious or even impertinent.

"5. That I may be kept from speaking amiss of my Christian brethren, I will *pray* for them.

"6. With the exception of cases in which Christian prudence requires secresy, I will consider it sinful to say any thing of others *privately*, which I would not say *openly*. In general, I will deal in *secrets* as little as possible.

"7. I will not mention the fault of another, when I have not good reason to hope that some valuable end will be answered by my doing so.

* This prescription was,—"Always repeat the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet before you give way to the impulse of anger." A prescription still more worthy, than that of the heathen philosopher, to be remembered, is—"When in anger, repeat the Lord's Prayer before you give utterance to your feelings."

"III. Self-examination.

"I will regard the Bible as the only infallible test of character. With this in my hands, if I am deceived as to my spiritual state, it is my own fault.

"I am satisfied that one great reason why so many real Christians live doubting, and die trembling, is the neglect of self-examination.

"1. I will beware of relying upon official religion. I will never take it for granted that I am a Christian because others consider me so; nor because my profession or station require that I should be a Christian.

"2. In judging of myself, I will make due allowance for the restraints I have been under from early education —from dear Christian friends, and from regard to public opinion; and will never ascribe to Christian principles the absence of faults which I am under no temptation to commit.

"3. In any doubtful case, where good and bad motives are mingled as excitements to action, I will not conclude that the good motives influence me, without the most serious scrutiny.

"4. I will watch my heart under *affliction*. As the severest strokes that I have felt hitherto, have been my *greatest mercies*, I will not, like the perverse child that attempts to resist or escape correction, try to break away from the rod of my heavenly Father; but will give him my hand and beg him to repeat his strokes, when he sees it necessary to purify my soul from sin.

"IV. Studies.

"1. I will read no book without the expectation of real benefit;—and will consider that as *lost time* which is spent in reading without *attention* and *reflection*.

"2. I will never covet the reputation of knowing *every thing*.

"3. I will never speak confidently when I am in doubt, nor scruple to *say* that I *am ignorant*, when I am so.

"4. Having suffered severely by late studies at night, I will never pursue any serious study after 10 o'clock in the evening.

"5. I will not read any book which I should be unwilling to have it *known* that I have read; or the reading of which I shall probably recollect with regret on my dying bed.

"6. Since my time for study is so much restricted by frail health and various engagements, I will consider it as a sacred duty to spend no time in the attitude of study, without direct and vigorous application of my mind to some important subject.

"7. I will not hold myself at liberty to neglect duties that are plainly devolved upon me by the providence of God, even though these duties debar me from studies which I earnestly wish to pursue.

"V. PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

"1. When I awake to the light of a new day, I will endeavor to ask myself, each morning, 'Could I know this to be my *last day* on earth, what duty that I have neglected ought to be performed?'

"2. That I may not be surprised by death, I will endeavor to carry with me the habitual recollection, that it *may* come at any moment.

"3. I will often reflect that this life is only preparatory to eternity; and that He who stationed me here, knows how and when to call me away.

"4. As my comfort in death must depend on my hope of heaven, I will often examine this hope; because if I have good reason to believe that I shall live with Christ in glory, I shall have no reason for reluctance in leaving this world, any more than the sentinel in being called

from his post after a stormy night, or the child who has been long from home, in returning to his father's house.

"5. I am satisfied from much observation, that the *bodily pangs* of *dying* are much less terrible than is commonly supposed, excepting in a few extreme cases. I will not therefore be greatly disquieted with the anticipation of these pangs.

"VI. PUBLIC DEPORTMENT.

"1. I will endeavor to remember that as a *minister* of the *gospel*, my office is more important than that of any earthly potentate.

"2. In my intercourse with men, I will endeavor not to degrade this office by exhibiting a *love of money*, one of the vilest and most dangerous passions that can infest the heart of a minister.

"3. I will watch against levity in conversation, a fault to which I am in danger of resorting as an antidote against the influence of feeble health. Yet

"4. I will not identify in feeling, or in my conduct tempt others to identify *religion* and *melancholy;* because if I were to paint a Pharisee, I should give him a *sad countenance;* but if an angel or my Saviour, a *cheerful* one. The fact that painters who are strangers to vital godliness, so generally, in representing Christ, give him the aspect of sadness, I will endeavor to make instructive to myself.

"VII. CARE OF MY HEALTH.

"The difference between that state of health which amounts to bare *existence*, and that which admits of vigorous mental action, is so great, that there is no earthly blessing I so earnestly desire as health. But as I am clearly destined to be an invalid while I live,

whatever I am to do for God and the church, is to be accomplished by systematic care of my frail body.

"1. I will not eat or drink any kind or quantity of food, that I have good reason to believe will impair my health.

"2. I will, when not sick, take exercise daily, equivalent to the labor of sawing and splitting wood two hours.

"3. When in perspiration, I will not stand or sit in cold air, without increase of clothing. I will not stand or walk on wet ground, in a cold season, without guarding my feet; and I will shun exposure to the evening, in cold or damp weather."

Appended to the preceding resolutions, are the following memorandum and resolution, dated

"Dec. 4, 1822. 'The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.' In my secret devotions this morning, this passage impressed my mind deeply. The parent says to the child, 'I cannot attend to your wishes *now* my child, come again when I am at leisure.' The teacher says to the pupil, 'I cannot forego my present engagements, come again and I will listen to you.' The suitor for justice finds so many cases on the docket before his own, that he must wait perhaps months or years before he can get access to the ear of his judge. But the ear of my Father in heaven is *always* open. He never says, 'Come to-morrow and I will listen.'—I resolve not to forget this *more than paternal* goodness."

Among the chosen means employed by Dr. Porter for promoting his growth in grace, besides the usual exercises of the closet—reading the Scriptures, meditation, self-examination and prayer—he was accustomed daily to read portions of devotional books, such as the writings of

Baxter, Jeremy Taylor, Howe, Flavel, and Owen. "Early in my ministry," he remarks, "it became my settled purpose to read a passage daily, if it were but a single page, in some spiritual writer of this class. My object was to promote the spirituality of my own heart, and keep in lively exercise its Christian sensibilities, in connection with my private devotions, and my preparations for the pulpit. I have always found, what I presume is common in the experience of my brethren, that no intellectual process, no degree of labor at the study table, would enable me to prepare a profitable sermon, unless my heart was kept near to God during its preparation. And amid the crowd of various avocations to which every minister is, more or less, unavoidably exposed, his heart cannot be thus kept, without means specially adapted, and systematically employed for this purpose." Alluding to the same subject, he says, in a letter to a friend, "I have learned, by the experience of years, that my *heart* requires a more exact regimen than my body. It is not sufficient for me daily to read a portion of the Bible. I need the stimulus of variety, and I have often found a passage of some spiritual writer to affect my feelings, when nothing else would awaken emotion." Means which he found so useful to himself he earnestly recommended to others, especially to his pupils. The conviction that an increase of devotional reading would exert a salutary influence on Christians generally, induced him near the close of his life to prepare for a publication an abridgment of Owen on Spiritual Mindedness, and on the cxxx. Psalm. These abridgments were prepared not by substituting, to any extent, his own language for that of the author, but by merely erasing pleonastic phraseology, which obscured the sense or enfeebled the expression.

In the cultivation of his spiritual feelings Dr. Porter was also *systematic*. It was a distinct part of his daily em-

ployment. "The heart," he writes to one in whose religious character he felt a lively interest, "*must* be taken care of, or nothing is done as to the great ends of immortal existence. This must be done, too, not by good *resolutions*, but by systematic, daily resort to the Bible and the closet. A watch would fulfil the purposes of its maker with a broken main-spring, as well as a man whose heart is not in order. But the main-spring will not make it go, unless daily wound up."

A brief extract from his Lecture on the Cultivation of Spiritual Habits, &c., which expresses with characteristic clearness his views of the paramount importance of *regularity* in these habits, may gratify the reader.

"The man who imagines that he can perform his secret devotions in the *street*, as well as in the *closet*, or as well without, as with *stated times* for the purpose, is ignorant of his own mind. Intellectual and spiritual, as well as other habits, are formed on the principles of association. In the regular recurrence of the thing to be done, there must be identity of *time*, and *place*, and *circumstances*. He who assigns to his closet devotions a particular season, will find the return of that season bring with it the recollection of the duty; so that the omission of it at the customary time, will be attended with mental uneasiness. His avocations too, will readily become adjusted to this settled order, so as not to intrude on his hours of communion with God. But the man who waits for *impulses*, and goes to his closet only at irregular times, has no advantage of *habit* in this duty. He attends to it without constancy, without preparation, and without enjoyment. He has no current of spiritual feeling; other engagements thrust themselves between him and God; the day and the night pass away, without any season of retirement; he forgets to pray, because he has no *system* in the care of his own

heart. Thus perhaps, he slides into estrangement from his closet, for days and weeks together.

"There is no point in Christian experience more settled than this, that there is an intimate connection between *enjoyment* in closet devotions, and *their return at regular seasons.* The best writers on the subject say so. Devout Christians, learned and unlearned, say so. Our own experience says so. Several hundred students of this seminary to whom, at different times I have put the inquiry, in private conversations, have been agreed on this point, without one exception.

"If you would form such spiritual habits, then, as shall promote your progress in personal religion, draw a sacred enclosure around your hallowed seasons of retirement, to preserve them from interruption. To accomplish this, your *times* of secret devotion should be so chosen, as not to interfere with other duties.*

Few men have so frequent and affecting admonitions of their frailty as Dr. Porter received from bodily infirmity. The result was a vivid and abiding impression of eternal realities, which obviously contributed to chasten, elevate, and strengthen his spiritual feelings. To his trials from infirmity, as ordered of God for his spiritual good, he felt himself deeply indebted, and in view of them, most cordially adopted the acknowledgment of the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." In the spirit of this acknowledgment he remarks, in a letter to his wife, "I have too much reason to confess, with a pious woman of Newburyport, that I should never have taken one step towards God, without the stripes of his correcting hand. And if still heavier strokes than have yet been inflicted, are necessary for my spiritual good, I desire to welcome

* See Lectures on Homiletics, &c., pp. 264—268.

them as the richest blessings." The subjoined letter, though somewhat miscellaneous, will, in this connection, be read with interest.

"My dear Wife,

"Since the autumn before I removed to Andover, you will recollect I have almost yearly had an October cold, more or less severe. Of late I think this has taken deeper hold of my lungs, at least has produced more cough than formerly, and my stomach and general system have had less strength to sustain its ravages. How long this struggle betwixt life and death, in my poor body, is to last, is a question which I rejoice it is not for me to determine. Yet He who made me, and sent me an agent into this world, requires me to use the proper means to preserve my life.

"As you, my dearest friend, have a deep interest in this subject, you are entitled to know my views more distinctly than I have before expressed them. And perhaps I cannot devote the little leisure which my present seclusion affords to a better use.

"I regard the enjoyment and the value of life as consisting wholly in its being devoted to the glory of God. This made it desirable to the world and to themselves, that Paul, and Luther, and Baxter should live. In the same view, I hope my own life has not been altogether in vain: though its best services to the church have been performed in 'weakness, and fear, and much trembling.' It is with unspeakable pleasure that I anticipate a meeting with some of our dear flock at Washington, to be my crown of rejoicing forever. But I have been surprised at the affectionate reception among that people, of services so extremely defective as mine often were. I have been more surprised at the candor and fraternal kindness with which my labors have been regarded, from the first, at

Andover, by professors, trustees, and students. And I have been not less surprised at the unremitted affection and confidence of Mr. Bartlet. In truth, excepting the customary routine of official duty, you know that I have often been able to accomplish less as a student, in a *month*, than in good health I might have done in *one day*. Now I know that to one who loves books, and loves his appropriate professional business as I do, here is room to glorify God by submission. And if I had grace enough to exhibit the Christian character in this respect, as it ought to be exhibited by one in my circumstances, then I could see how my life might turn to good account at Andover, though even less active and productive of positive fruit, than it has been. But as the case is, I must frankly say, that I have felt no subject of solicitude half so oppressive, as the apprehension that the partial friendship of the dear men with whom I have been connected, might make them and me overrate the importance of my usefulness, and subject our beloved seminary to injury on my account.

"On the subject of leaving this world, I must have been something less than a Christian or a reasonable man, not to have made this familiar to my thoughts, for many years. During the last years of my pastoral life, I collected and classed a great variety of cases of dying persons, with a view to my own benefit. The object was to examine the views of different Christians in this case, to ascertain principles. In all my infirmities however, I have seldom had disquieting views of death, and have in no instance considered it to be very near. As a specimen of feeling at those times when I have thought death desirable, I send you these lines, scribbled with my pencil, in my berth at sea; after an interval of near thirty years since my pen attempted a couplet in verse.

"Welcome, lonely, tranquil grave,
The weary pilgrim's bed;
My languid limbs thy refuge crave,
Thy rest, my aching head.

"Restless world, that sleep will close
Thy scenes of grief and care:
No pains nor conflicts, sins nor woes,
Invade the slumber there.

"Soul, redeem'd by grace divine,
From chains of guilt and clay,
Spring from thy fetters, rise and shine,
In realms of endless day.

"Such feelings have most predominated, when my prospects of usefulness to the church have been most clouded. Aside from what I am to accomplish for God, I would as soon be a *mole* or a *brick-bat* as the occupant of any throne in Europe."

An effect of Dr. Porter's infirmities deserving a passing notice, was an increase of his natural susceptibility of emotion in view of the trials of others. Of the depth and tenderness of his sympathy, the reader may judge from the subjoined extracts of letters to two of his earliest and most beloved friends in the ministry, who had been called to drink the cup of affliction. The first, written from Georgia, in 1817, was addressed to Rev. Bezaleel Pinneo of Milford, Conn.

"Brother Pinneo,

"It was in my heart to visit you in passing on to the south, but I presume you have received my apology, left with brother S———. I was especially desirous to call on you, because I was told that Mrs. P. was sick. In Georgia, the afflictive intelligence has come to me that the

dear woman is gone! In this distant country, the news that a woman of uncommon excellence, one whom I loved for her own sake, and loved because she was the wife of my friend, and was dear to others who are dear to me, was a heavy stroke to my heart. How much heavier the stroke to *you*, to your *children*, to her *mother*, and *brother!*

"I rejoice to be told that you was enabled to bear this affliction in a manner becoming a minister of the gospel. I say *enabled*, because though I am comparatively a stranger to such affliction, as every one is who has not *felt* it, I am satisfied there is no adequate support in such a case, but that arm which is divine and almighty. In your case, too, I am satisfied that such support is especially necessary, because a husband and family can seldom be called to part with so much worth and loveliness in the character of a *wife* and *mother*. I write this letter not to aggravate your grief; not to instruct you on a subject where I know you are much wiser than myself, but to assure you that an old friend does most sincerely mourn with you. But if I understand her character, she has left the best sort of evidence that she is gone from earth to heaven, from a prison to a palace, from darkness to everlasting day, from sin and sinful associates to the spirits of the just made perfect; to see her Saviour, and to be *like* him and *with* him forever. Could we wish to recall her from such joy, to weep and struggle again here?

"But your children have no *mother!* God Almighty bless you and them, my brother, and sustain you under this loss. Surely it is time we were all prepared to die. Your wife is gone. Drs. Strong, and Backus, and Dwight are gone. Oh, what heavy strokes God is dealing out upon the church! In the darkness and desolations of this region, my heart exclaims, 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth.' Ever yours."

To Rev. Zephaniah Swift of Derby, Conn., he writes:—

"Brother Swift,

"I have accidentally heard of the death of your amiable and beloved daughter H———. After having spent forty-six years in this dying world, and fifteen in the ministry—and after all my personal infirmities, I am really unqualified to sympathise with you under such a trial, because I have not *felt* it. Is it so indeed that four of your family are in the grave! and *three* within as many years past? Truly such a fact stamps poverty and emptiness on the best satisfactions of this world. But I hope you have under these repeated strokes a source of consolation which death cannot impair, and which affliction only renders the more invaluable. I hope you feel with the excellent J. Newton, when his wife was dead in his house, that 'as a *sinner* he had no *right*, and as a *believer*, no *reason* to complain.'"—In a subsequent letter to the same individual he remarks, "I think, my dear brother, God must design you for great usefulness here, or great blessedness hereafter, or both; by the trials to which he calls you. Much as I love you, my sympathies cannot reach the spot that has so often bled in your heart. I have not felt the stroke that inflicted the wound. But I know it was inflicted by one whose wisdom, and benevolent regard to you, infinitely surpass my own. And if I am sure of any thing by experience, I know that the severest strokes of the same paternal hand, which I have felt, have been my greatest mercies."

Among the developments of Dr. Porter's piety, was a deep sense of *his sinfulness and dependence on sovereign grace.* Though he was not accustomed either in his correspondence or conversation to say much of his own feel-

ings, he occasionally alluded to the native sinfulness of his heart in terms which indicated the conviction that it was radical and entire. An instance or two is subjoined. In a letter to Mrs. Porter, after speaking of his comfortable accommodations, and his freedom from anxiety, he asks,—"But have I no troubles? Some. A desperately wicked heart gives me more trouble than all other things." A memorandum, dated Jan. 1, 1817, reads as follows.—"The first time I wrote this date, it made my hand tremble. Not that there is any novelty to me in a new year, for I have become so familiar with the flight of time, as scarcely to notice it. The first time I entered at all into the succession of years, as marked Anno Domini, was at the age of eleven, on seeing 1783 marked on the title page of an Almanac. This was the text of a serious sermon to my young mind. Oh that the sensibility of my childhood, which is almost extinct, were succeeded by the wisdom which ought to accompany my advanced years. During every hour of the past year, while awake, I have committed sin enough to deserve endless misery. So I have done always, and *shall do* while I live. Truly, whoever else has room to boast, or to hope on the ground of personal merit, —I have none. That my heart is desperately wicked, is not a matter of *theory* but of *experience*. I *know* it is so, with the same certainty and with the same sort of evidence, as I know that I exist. O my indebtedness to grace, *boundless, matchless* grace; pardoning grace; preserving grace! If I am to live through 1817, Lord help me to live as becomes a Christian minister at the age of *forty-four*."

His piety was equally marked by *resignation* and *filial confidence in God*. "I desire" he remarks in a letter to Mrs. Porter, already quoted, "to be submissive to all the variety of infirmity, which it pleases God that I shall suffer; while I have the fullest conviction that his chastise-

ments are both just and kind—*just* because I deserve them, and *kind* because I need them. I have learned that my happiness ought to be, and is, in exact proportion to my confidence and joy in God.—The doctrine of a universal Providence is one of the most practical articles of my belief. Aside from a full, and I think, joyful acquiescence in this, I could not be comfortable for a single day." The following rebuke to an intimate and beloved brother in the ministry, breathes a similar sentiment.—"Your perplexities are a severe trial to my feelings; but I trust they will soon be over. You manifestly *look back* too much—you talk too much the language of despondence and self-condemnation. You have done what you and your most impartial Christian friends thought was best. Your judgment, now clouded by too much painful solicitude, condemns the decisions of your judgment when it was clear and vigorous. *Cui bono?* If you had been like ———— ————, dismissed against the advice of your best friends, the case would be vastly different. As it is, you have only to trust Providence, and march forward with a cheerful heart. All will be well."

A letter from Dr. Porter to his colleagues, written in 1830, while he was returning from St. Augustine, presents in beautiful relief the trait of his piety we are now considering. He had been advised by some of his friends to spend the summer at sea, by others to spend it in journeying by land, while his own feelings strongly urged him to return, at least for a season, to Andover. This letter was written while he was doubting which of these courses to pursue.—"You cannot be aware, dear brethren, how impatiently I long to meet you again, in the enjoyments and labors of our beloved seminary. During my exile for so many weary months, my poor heart has often throbbed with painful emotions, when I have thought of my study, my family, my colleagues, my neighbors—the lecture

room and chapel exercises of the seminary. And then I have said, 'the cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' 'Lie still throbbing heart; God knows what is best; and I would not, if I could, take the disposal of my lot from his hands into my own.'"

Another characteristic of Dr. Porter's piety was *humility*. Naturally unassuming, he had been taught by grace, "in lowliness of mind" to esteem others better than himself; and in regard to his own spiritual character he had learned from the same instructor, "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." In a letter to his wife he remarks,—"It is doubtless owing to my insensibility that I have not been more humbled and quickened by the dealings of God with me, viewed in the light of *personal* afflictions. Considering my mercies and trials both, as a means of sanctification, I look on my little attainments in holiness with wonder and shame. I often mourn that the teachers of my childhood were so injudicious, and so unfaithful, and so unskilful in the direction of my literary pursuits: but oh, how much more reason have I to lament that, with the instructions of a *perfect Teacher*, I have been a dull pupil in the school of Christ. With the same kind of discipline that made Baxter a luminary in the Christian firmament, I am but an insect scarcely rendered visible by emitting an occasional, feeble light amid surrounding darkness." "Who," asks Dr. Woods, in his discourse at Dr. Porter's interment, "who ever had reason to suppose that he thought of himself more highly than he ought to think? that in any respect he overrated his talents, his influence, his services, or his piety? When and where did he expect an honor which others were not ready to bestow upon him, or manifest the feeling that he was not held high enough among his brethren? It was far otherwise. He was so evidently unassuming and humble, that, although he was always in all societies, placed among the

first in point of influence, no one envied him, or felt the least uneasiness that his talents or services were estimated so highly."

The piety of Dr. Porter was eminently of a *cheerful* and *social* character. With very few exceptions, he was what he resolved to be, a *cheerful* Christian, equally remote from levity and austerity. This ought doubtless to be attributed in part, to his constitutional equanimity, which exempted him in an unusual degree from perturbation by the ordinary occurrences of life, and enabled him so effectually to repress his feelings as rarely to manifest excitement. But it is attributable still more to an unwavering trust in God, and an habitual sense of his presence. In few cases perhaps, is more nearly realized the happy union of filial joy and reverence, contemplated in the following paragraph from Luther's "Table Talk."—"I would fain see one that could make these two agree together, to be joieful and to be afraid. I cannot behave myself in that manner towards God, that my little son John can show himself towards me; for when I sit in my studie and write or doe something else, then my boy sings me a song, and when he will be too loud, then I check him a little: yet nevertheless he singeth on, but with a more mild and softer voice, and somewhat with fear and reverence: even so would God have us to doe." The society of the people of God he ardently loved. No favor is more gratefully acknowledged in his correspondence. Whether on sea or land, any want of accommodations, any untoward events were easily borne, nay seem scarcely to have been felt, so long as he was permitted to hold fellowship with Christian society. On the other hand, though capable of fully appreciating the attractions of intelligence, of politeness, and of correct deportment; no society, however attractive in these respects, if destitute of piety, could strongly and permanently engage his affections. As expressive of his

feelings, the following extract is cited from a journal, in which he describes the residence, and most gratefully acknowledges the hospitality of an intelligent and highly respectable gentleman in one of the southern States, with whom he had spent several days as a guest. "Here I had perhaps as high a specimen of elegant hospitality as any country can furnish. My host and his children are communicants in the —— church; but I fear are strangers to piety:—not even the form of devotion is seen here! So much that I am constrained to call excellence and loveliness, and yet nothing that I *can* call piety! Oh!—I am charmed with this spot: and yet give me all its charms, united with the wealth of Crœsus and the power of Cæsar, I would not live here; I would not be 'smothered to death,' in the embraces of a smiling world. No, I would rush away from such enchantment. Rather than trust my wretched heart in such peril, give me my Bible, and let me be the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain."

In this connection it should be observed, that the meeting for religious worship was ever his chosen resort. For the last several years of his life, indeed, he was entirely prevented, by the state of his health, from attending meetings abroad in the evening; and not unfrequently on the Sabbath, was for the same reason detained from the sanctuary. This he accounted one of the severest privations occasioned by his frailty. The following extract of a letter to Mrs. Porter in 1820, during a confinement by illness at Baltimore, already alluded to, exhibits the feelings of one who "longed, yea, even fainted for the courts of the Lord."

"Perhaps this is my first letter dated on the Sabbath; but I trust the spirit which governs my pen, is not inconsistent with the sanctity of the Lord's day. Two dreary Sabbaths I spent on the deep, without (as I suppose) one

Christian soul associated in our company. To-day and yesterday, I feel more like health, than for any equal period in four weeks. But my confinement renders it improper to attend public worship. Still, though not permitted to unite, as to form, in the regular duties of the Sabbath, I am permitted to *love*, and I trust to enjoy them, above thousands who mingle in its external observances. For example, here are one Scotch, one Presbyterian, two Episcopal, and several Methodist churches, whose ministers and many of whose members I suppose to be children of the Most High God. I hear their bells ring—I know substantially the import of their prayers. Now, without disturbing any worshipper, or occupying the seat of another, I can be present in spirit, with any of these churches. In the same manner, I can transfer myself to the Circular church in Charleston, or the beloved chapel of Andover. So far as I possess the genuine spirit of the Sabbath, I cannot be debarred from the communion of the saints. Blessed be God that I was not born to the sottish ignorance of the Hindoo; nor to the senseless levity of the Parisian rabble, where the Sabbath indeed is allowed a name, while its religious rites are mingled with ten thousand discordant sounds, from the chisel of the mason, the hammer of the auctioneer, the notes of the crier, the mirth of dancing parents and children, and the thunder of gilded chariots in the mad whirl of dissipation. Oh, the horrible guilt of those ministers of religion, who have contributed to sink a nation of Christendom to such debasement! And among us Protestants, I fear there are many who officially lead the devotions of others, who are strangers in spirit, to the benefits and comforts of communion with God."

Dr. Porter's piety was *active*. Regarding the "enjoyment and the value of life as consisting wholly in its being

devoted to the glory of God," it was the purpose of his life "to glorify Him on the earth, and to finish the work which was given him to do." In his accustomed sphere of labor, and in his oft repeated journies,

> ——————— "His care was fixed
> To fill his odorous lamp with deeds of light,
> And hope that reaps not shame."

Often in his letters to Mrs. Porter he speaks in an unostentatious way, of some plan he was executing, or had in contemplation for the good of Zion—thus manifesting the spirit that prompted the exclamation, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Of his activity, and of the extent and efficiency of his efforts in connection with various benevolent associations, the reader will be able to judge from the reference to this subject in a subsequent part of the memoir. Probably there have been few men within the last quarter of a century, to whose counsels and labors the cause of Christian philanthropy is more indebted. These counsels were characterized by wisdom, these labors were guided by Christian principle; while the zeal from which they emanated, was tempered by discretion.

It may be added as another feature of Dr. Porter's piety, that he had acquired to an unusual extent, *the power of self-control.* By this his actions were modified, as well in respect to food, to dress, to equipage, to deportment in his family, and in social intercourse generally, as in respect to his sacred and responsible station as an ambassador of Christ, and an instructor of candidates for the same holy calling. His "resolutions" adopted in his most devotional frames, were not mere expressions of feeling to be forgotten or violated at pleasure; they were *practical rules,* drawn

from the pages of revealed truth, to which his life from day to day, was studiously conformed. As an instance of the control which he exercised over himself, it is worthy to be recorded, that though daily called for years to read and hear as a critic the sermons of others, and on that account, peculiarly exposed to become a merely intellectual and captious hearer, he had, by the blessing of God on his efforts, acquired the ability almost entirely to lay aside his critical habits in the house of God; like the ordinary Christian, to "receive with meekness the ingrafted word," and to profit by an application of it to his own heart. Effectually to secure this control, he adopted the determination, from which he rarely deviated, that he would not allow himself to remark in his family, on the performances of the sanctuary.

In addition to the traits of his piety already enumerated, it was characterized by *gentleness*, *simplicity*, and *godly sincerity*—graces which were as distinctly observable, and which perhaps contributed as much to give a cast to his religious character, and to promote his usefulness, as any of those previously named.

As might have been expected, the Christian character of Dr. Porter was distinguished for *uniformity* and *consistency*. Few men, in these respects, could with more propriety adopt the language of the apostle, when addressing their fellow Christians:—"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Some allowance, indeed, ought doubtless to be made in his case for constitutional temperament. But uniformity and consistency were the natural fruits of his regular devotional habits; his abiding sense of dependence on grace, his cordial resignation, his entire consecration to the service of God, and his habits of self-control. The man who employs systematically and faithfully the means of spiritual culture which God has appointed, we do not ordinarily expect to find shrouded in

spiritual darkness. The man who daily feels his dependence on sovereign grace, and cherishes a spirit of submission, we do not expect to see the subject of despondency. He whose consecration to the service of God is entire and steady; who has brought his passions, his desires, his pursuits, "into captivity to the obedience of Christ," we do not expect to see led astray by common allurements, frustrated by common obstacles, daunted by common opposition.

> "This is the man whom storms can never make
> Meanly complain; nor can a flattering gale
> Make him talk proudly: he hath no desire
> To read his secret fate: yet unconcern'd
> And calm, can meet his unborn destiny
> In all its charming, or its frightful shapes."

Among the *fruits* of Dr. Porter's piety was uncompromising faithfulness in the discharge of duty. He loved to contemplate the character of Nehemiah. Viewing himself the servant of Christ, he wished to be thus viewed by others; and having adopted the principle of fearlessly obeying God, leaving the results to his sovereign disposal, he shrunk not from obvious Christian duty through fear of being deemed sanctimonious or impertinent. When associated with others even as a travelling companion, the benevolence of his motives, the holiness of his conduct, in a word, the light of his piety were so manifested, as to win respect for himself, and command deference for religion. Among those with whom he was to be associated several days, as on a voyage at sea, he was accustomed, if possible, to establish religious order, at least so far as to have religious service at table; and where it could be done, social worship morning and evening. In his efforts for this purpose he was so conciliating and discreet, and at the same time so persevering, as rarely to meet a repulse. And in a few instances, to which he

alludes in his letters, he was successful in similar efforts under less favorable circumstances.

Once when passing through Long-Island Sound on board a steam-boat, with a numerous company including several clergymen, he proposed having a blessing asked, and thanks returned at table. A part only even of his clerical brethren thought it worth while to make the attempt, as having been before made without success. The captain was consulted and cordially assented to the proposal. Dr. Porter then requested a military gentleman to call the company to order at the table, saying at the same time, "though I should much prefer to have you do it, if you object, I will do it myself." When the company were summoned to dinner, and had generally become seated, Gen. M. rapped on the table, and observed that, as several clergymen were present, he presumed no one would object to having a *blessing* asked. Several voices responded "certainly not." He then requested Dr. Porter to perform the duty. After most of the company had dined, he again called to order, and requested another clergyman to return thanks. This occurred in the autumn. As Dr. Porter journeyed the following spring through the western part of Massachusetts, he spent a night in Northampton, where he learned the existence of an interesting revival. After preaching in the evening to an attentive audience, he was called upon by Gen. M—., who informed him that as a result of the effort to establish religious order on board the steam-boat, one of the passengers, a merchant of his acquaintance, was so much affected, that he retired immediately to his berth for reflection. For the first time he realized the attractiveness and worth of piety, and the deplorableness of his own state while destitute of it. His impressions which were deepened by a domestic affliction of subsequent occurrence, resulted in his becoming a hopeful convert—the

first fruit of a revival which extended into adjacent towns, and numbered several hundred subjects.

At another time when riding in a stage coach, some of the company had been greatly annoyed by the profaneness of a fellow-passenger, but had borne it in silence. Dr. Porter resolved that he would improve the first favorable moment, to administer reproof. The company having resumed their seats after a brief stop for the change of horses, he thus addressed his companions;—"Now I propose, gentlemen, that we have no more swearing; I will agree not to swear, if the rest will."—The remark had the desired effect.

On a certain occasion, Dr. Porter accompanied by three individuals, one of them a clergyman, took lodgings at a public house where they were to remain a little time for the transaction of business. In accordance with his usage in such cases, he proposed that they should have religious service at their table; and if practicable morning and evening worship with the family; if not that they should unite in social prayer in their room. The suggestion was not cordially received by his companions, which led to a conversation on the question of duty, in such circumstances. They retired without even a season of social prayer;—not all of them to rest, however; for the conscience of the dissenting clergyman told him of neglected duty. He arose early in the morning and informed the family of the proposal which had been made the preceding evening, and of the conversation respecting it. With an expression of regret that it had not at the time been communicated, the landlord desired that his family, none of whom were pious, might at least be called together for worship in the morning. The influence of the season was salutary and permanent;—one of the family soon became hopefully the subject of renewing grace.

Several letters are found among his papers from different persons, expressing a grateful sense of obligation to his fidelity, in reproving errors or pointing out defects of character, which he was apprehensive might impair their usefulness or happiness. For the discharge of these duties, he was favored by the Creator with peculiar qualifications. Endued with singular delicacy of feeling, free even from the appearance of a dictatorial spirit, and obviously actuated by Christian benevolence, his reproofs were often welcome, where if they had been administered with a different spirit they would have met disregard and repulse. It required, indeed, uncommon jealousy and acerbity, to suspect his motives, and repel his kind offices.

The letter which follows, written a few years after his removal to Andover, presents an instance of Christian fidelity, honorable to religion, and creditable alike to the sensibility and the heart of its author. It was addressed to a highly respectable clergyman, now deceased, and was occasioned by the apprehension that he was becoming addicted to an immoderate use of strong drink.

"My dear Sir,

"I will not stand to inquire whether the degree of intercourse betwixt you and myself in years past, authorizes the freedom of this letter. But if any apology is necessary, I shall find it at once, in the important station you hold in the church, and in the love and respect which I have always entertained for you, since our first acquaintance at college. Let me only premise that the subject of this communication is and will be confined to my own bosom:—should you deem it officious or impertinent, you will not ascribe it to bad motives, and will just commit it to the flames, assured that no evil can result from it.

"You are doubtless aware, my dear brother, that an occurrence at ———, on a late public occasion, which

deeply involved your character, produced a strong excitement abroad. The shock was deeply felt among your Christian friends. But the prompt and frank confession with which it was said you met the thing, induced those who, conscious of their own defects, look with candor on those of others, to hope that it was only such a slip as any good man might, in an unguarded moment, commit. For myself I can say that regarding the occurrence as *incidental*, and as no part of a *settled habit*, you was instantly and fully restored to my Christian confidence. But if I act the part of a Christian friend, and tell you all my heart, I must tell you that at a recent interview at your house, there were indications in your countenance and conversation which alarmed me. Br. S ——, who felt the same alarm, is the only human being to whom my apprehension will be known, except to yourself. I was the more distressed with this apprehension, because I was assured that a second slip would ruin you altogether as a minister. If my fears were groundless, you will, I know, forgive them, and explain them consistently with the belief that I am, as I profess to be, very sincerely,

"Your brother."

"Rev. —— ——."

Dr. Porter's susceptibility of enjoyment from contemplating the works of nature and the productions of art, was much increased by piety. The latter when of a useful character, he was wont to encourage by such expressions of his approbation as clearly evinced that he considered their encouragement a part of Christian duty. And though his infirmities, and his numerous avocations, forbade his pursuing to any extent the study of the natural sciences, still he was an interested, devoted student of nature. To his eye, her scenery was rich in beauty; to his mind was replete with instruction; to his heart was prolific in exalted,

benevolent enjoyment. "His," in the language of a writer he greatly admired,

> "His were the mountains, and the vallies his,
> And the resplendent rivers. His t' enjoy
> With a propriety that none can feel,
> But who with filial confidence inspired,
> Can smiling say, 'My Father made them all.'"

This sketch of Dr. Porter's Christian character we conclude with the following testimony from his colleagues who knew him best, and most ardently loved him. Says Professor Stuart, among other suggestions respecting his character kindly furnished at the writer's request,——

"His piety was of the most sober cast, but of the deepest, most steady and enduring kind. Judgment and reason held their place here as in every thing else; and although susceptible of powerful emotions, and often the subject of them, yet his conduct was not rendered unsteady by them.

"Deeper sense of sin and ill desert; more habitual sense of dependence on God, and obligation resulting from his mercies; more entire devotedness to the interests of the church, it would be difficult to find. It has not been my lot to witness them in a higher degree.

"Never have I known accumulated and protracted sufferings from ill health, more completely borne so as to commend religion. Few men ever suffer so long and so much; still fewer exhibit such an example of submission and filial quietude. Most men have their temper injured by protracted distresses, his was visibly softened and subdued."

In Dr. Woods's sermon already alluded to, we find a similar though somewhat fuller view of Dr. Porter's religious character.

"As to Christian character, it would be difficult to name a man of more unquestionable piety than Dr. Porter.

The evidence he gave of this was the evidence to which the sacred Scriptures attach the highest importance; that is, *a life devoted to God, and regulated by the precepts of the Gospel.* His pious affections had both strength and ardor, though they were remarkably sedate and rational. I know not whether he was more distant from extravagance and enthusiasm, or from coldness and indifference. His religion exhibited itself in a *steady, active, holy principle,* and not as a *passionate excitement.* He had a uniform and most hearty aversion to all ostentation and display. And this, together with his humble estimation of his own piety, rendered him reserved as to his own religious exercises. He was indeed slow to speak of any thing which related particularly to himself. But there were times when he unbosomed his religious feelings with freedom. From his conversation at such times, from his circumspect example, and the whole development, public and private, which he made of his character, it was abundantly evident that he 'walked with God,' and made it his object to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. His enjoyments in religion, whether in health or in sickness, were, as we should naturally suppose from his general character, tranquil and uniform, rather than rapturous. Such was his habit of watchfulness and circumspection, such his balance of mind, his control over his appetites and passions, and his maturity of religious principle, and such his sense of God's all-seeing eye, that he was less accessible than most Christians to the influence of temptation, and more perfectly prepared for conflicts. He endured his long continued infirmities, and the distressing diseases with which he was frequently attacked, with an equanimity and patience almost unparalleled. I never knew a man who accomplished so much, and enjoyed so much, with health so often interrupted and feeble, and with sickness so severe and exhausting."

Perusing the record of a life distinguished for Christian virtues, we unconsciously look forward to its termination, anticipating in its closing scene an exhibition of the graces and consolations which are usually the consequents of steady and devoted piety. We think of the feelings of Paul, when he had fought the good fight, and finished his course, desiring to depart and receive his crown of rejoicing—of Luther, thrice saying with his expiring breath, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit; God of truth thou hast redeemed me"—of Brainerd, exclaiming, "I shall soon glorify God with the angels"—of Edwards, bidding the weeping and desponding circle at his bedside, "trust in God, and ye need not fear"—of Payson, giving vent to faith and extatic joy, "peace! peace! victory! victory!"—of Evarts, struggling to utter unutterable emotions, "we cannot understand, we cannot comprehend—wonderful glory! I will praise, I will praise him! Jesus reigns." It might be deemed matter of regret that the servant of God whose character we are contemplating, was not permitted to leave, as a legacy to his friends and the church, his dying experience of the sanctifying, sustaining, transporting power of that Gospel to which his heart was indissolubly wedded, and to whose dissemination his life had been steadily devoted. But 'the Lord hath done it,' and survivors may not repine. The history of his last illness is little else than a detail of the progress of disease, paralyzing physical energies, overpowering reason, and sundering mortal ties. Reason, indeed, seemed still to hover over him, as though waiting to reassert her wrested prerogatives; and sometimes for a moment the attendants were cheered with the hope, that the dying man might again manifest his wonted intelligence, and faith, and joy in God. But the hope was disappointed. It was the decree of that sovereignty of which he loved to view himself the subject, that his *intellectual faculties* should

slumber till awaked with augmented capabilities in a higher and holier sphere, to purer and more elevated enjoyments. Happily it may be said of Dr. Porter as it is of Archbishop Leighton,—"No record is necessary of the dying moments of a man, whose path had been a shining light up to the moment when the shades of death closed over it. God was assuredly the strength of his heart in the hour of his last agony, and is now his glorious portion, his exceeding and eternal great reward. It was needless for himself that he should have notice of the bridegroom's coming; for his lamp was always trimmed, his loins were always girded. To his surviving friends it could have afforded little additional satisfaction, to have heard him express on his death-bed, that faith and holy hope, of which his life had been one unbroken example; neither could he have left, for the benefit of posterity, any sayings more suitable to a dying believer than those he daily uttered; living as he had long lived, on the confines of the eternal world."* Be it our care suitably to acknowledge the goodness of God, which enabled his servant so eminently to exhibit the "fruits of the Spirit," and in our conduct to copy the example.

* Life of Leighton, Works, vol. i. p. 76.

CHAPTER XIII.

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER.

Ministerial character. Theological studies—Settlement at Washington—First efforts directed to improvement of the young—Instructions respecting parental duties—Catechetical instruction—Results—Estimate of maternal influence—Reliance on doctrinal instruction—On activity in doing good to promote growth in piety—Mode of preaching—Efforts in training his vocal powers—Pastoral labors—Revival.——Studies—Desire of improvement—Observance of propriety in public religious services—Concern respecting reputation—Activity—Solicitude for the purity of the church—Theological views—Letters to Dr. Tyler—Extracts from Letter on Revivals.

We are next to contemplate Dr. Porter as a minister of the gospel, and an officer of a theological seminary.

Having pursued theological study about a year and a half with Rev. John Smalley, D. D., of Berlin, Conn., he received license to preach in the autumn of 1794, when but twenty-two years of age, and of appearance so youthful, as to be deemed still younger. His performances as a preacher were from the first well received, and he was soon favored with flattering invitations to settle. In deciding upon the acceptance of his call from Washington, he seems to have considered the question no other than whether his life should be spent among that people; and from the moment of his decision, to have regarded that as

his permanent field of labor. In this he was not more influenced by the usages of the times, than by the principle—a principle which he retained through life—that a minister should not, except for the most weighty reasons, leave a parochial charge to which by Providence he had been called. Few subjects caused him more solicitude in after life, than the readiness, which he saw was gaining prevalence both among ministers and people, to dissolve the pastoral relation for reasons comparatively unimportant, and the facility with which the dissolution was effected—an evil of daily increasing magnitude. Upon the stability and permanency of the ministry, under God, he rested his only hope of the prosperity of Zion.

His plan of ministerial labor, formed under the expectation above alluded to, was sufficiently extensive, to require for its execution the diligent employment of all his energies through life.

His first efforts were directed to the improvement of the youth and children of his charge. He took a deep interest in the schools of his parish; considered it a part of his duty to visit them regularly and often, and to maintain over them a watchful supervision. He was accustomed to keep a record of the teachers and scholars; to note with much precision the appearance of the schools at his several visits, and particularly to note the measure of proficiency discoverable at the examinations, that he might judge correctly of their improvement from year to year. He used, also, frequently to invite the teachers to assemble in his study, where a favorable opportunity was afforded *them* for interchange of feeling and sentiment, and *him* to make such suggestions as their deficiencies, or the circumstances of their schools might demand. That he might inspire the youth with a love of intelligence, and might afford them facilities for its acquisition

which otherwise most of them could not have enjoyed, he taught, for several years, a select class composed of those who had completed their pupilage in the common schools. The instruction of this class afforded him a desirable opportunity of inculcating religious truth, under circumstances peculiarly adapted to give it efficacy in forming correct theological sentiments, and stable moral character. And the best evidence of his faithfulness in improving this opportunity, is found in the fact which he learned in subsequent life, that almost all the youth whom he instructed, afterwards became hopefully pious, and many of them owned his instructions as the instrument. As he advanced in years his conviction was strengthened that much of a minister's usefulness must depend on judicious efforts for the improvement of the young.

A measure on which Dr. Porter placed great reliance in training the youth of his charge, to correct opinions and habits, was the establishment of a library, selected with particular reference to their improvement. Of the original selection, and of the occasional additions, he wisely secured the control. As a result of this measure, he was permitted to witness a most desirable transformation of character—attachment to frivolity succeeded by fondness for reading and reflection. As the efforts he employed exclusively to convey *religious* instruction to the young, are described at length in his account of the revival among his people, a specification of them here is unnecessary.

Auxiliary to his designs for the moral improvement of youth and children, he was careful to keep before the minds of professedly pious parents their duties to their *baptized* children. Occasional meetings were appointed for the consideration of these duties, which parents were urged to attend, accompanied by their children. These meetings afforded a favorable opportunity for explaining

and enforcing, under circumstances adapted to secure attention, the *conditions* of the covenant between God and his people; the *nature* of the baptismal dedication, and the *mutual obligations* of parent and child growing out of it. He inculcated the doctrine of infant baptism as one, the reception and practice of which are connected with the richest spiritual blessings, and he had reason to rejoice that the practice of the doctrine was attended with such blessings to his people. The meetings alluded to, were indirectly productive of good to many children whose parents were not professed believers. Such parents were led to inquire, and in some instances with deep solicitude, "Are those children who have been dedicated to God in baptism, the heirs, on account of the covenant relations of their parents, of blessings which in no sense belong to ours? Are we not then guilty, and may we not be accounted the abettors, if not the authors of their ruin?" By some parents in this state of mind, the desire was signified that their children might attend the meetings. Dr. Porter often expressed the conviction, as the result of his observation while a pastor, that believing parents can in no way more effectually admonish unbelievers and excite them to reflection, than by a due observance of the duties they covenant to perform in the dedication of their children in baptism.

As connected with his other efforts for the spiritual benefit of the young, Dr. Porter placed a very high value on systematic catechetical instruction. A quotation from his Memoir of Rev. Asahel Hooker, will best exhibit his views on this subject. Having alluded to the fact that Rev. Dr. Bellamy, "pressed as he was with the labors of the study, the care of the churches, and of students in theology," was accustomed to devote the intervals between divine service on the Sabbath, to catechetical instruction of the children of his parish, accommodating himself to

their capacities, and exhibiting the simplicity and kindness best suited to affect their hearts, he adds,—"Let it not be thought foreign to the design of these pages to say that so eminent an example is worthy of imitation. Among the excellent ministers that adorn the churches of our country, probably there are too few, who suitably blend the labors of the study with the details of pastoral duty. We have deemed it more honorable to *speculate* than to *act*. We have sunk the *catechist* into the *metaphysician*. Our champions have not learned the blessed art of building the walls of Jerusalem with one hand, while they wield the polemic pen with the other. Men of the world reverse this proceeding. They rely more upon *action* than upon *speculation*. The latter has its use in the affairs of husbandry, commerce and war. But it is *action* that gives men bread; that builds and mans fleets; that establishes and overturns empires. Nothing but systematic and vigorous action can repair the waste places of the church, and make her *comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners*. If Christian ministers should unite for example, in the work of catechising children and youth, and carry it to its highest practicable extent, what an incalculable amount of good would be accomplished! In every place almost, it would attach the hearts of old and young to their pastor. It would assist him in adapting the instructions of the pulpit to the capacities of his hearers, and have a tendency to render his sermons serious, plain and profitable. It would enable him to turn to the best account his pastoral visits, and, in some of those precious moments that are too often wasted, on such occasions, to drop a serious remark that would fix an indelible impression on the infant mind.

"The system of catechising as practised in Scotland, has been productive of the most salutary consequences, and probably it is not too much to say, that in this country

more has been done to promote correct religious opinions, by that little manual called the Assembly's Catechism, than by any other mere human composition."

Since these remarks of Dr. Porter were written, probably the majority of pastors in this country, have been more awake than formerly, to the religious instruction of the young. But their efforts have been chiefly in the way of promoting Sabbath schools, and until quite recently, it must be acknowledged, very much to the exclusion of the Assembly's Catechism. Though many of our Sabbath school books are of excellent character and tendency, it is matter of devout thanksgiving that a disposition is again manifesting itself, to restore this manual to the place assigned to it by Bellamy, and other venerable men of past generations.

Dr. Porter's labors for the benefit of children and youth soon rendered him the object of their confidence and affection. At the same time parents were induced by the interest he manifested in their families, to seek and confide in his counsel in relation to their own duties. A "great door and effectual" was thus opened, which a different course of conduct might have closed against him. Soon after his settlement, at a time when fondness for amusement was very prevalent among the youth of his parish, several pious mothers sought his advice in reference to the best mode of counteracting this propensity in their daughters. His reply was,—"Let those mothers, whose daughters are often together, frequently meet for prayer, and conversation respecting their duties as mothers;"—thus recommending in effect, what subsequent experience has shown to be invaluable,—*Maternal Associations*. This advice was followed, with peculiarly gratifying results. The estimate which Dr. Porter was accustomed to place on the value of maternal influence, may be inferred from the following remarks which, in

substance, he sometimes made to his pupils when about leaving the theological seminary. "You will have your names often cast out as evil, your motives misrepresented, your labors impeded, and disappointment often weighing heavily on your spirits. But in the midst of your deepest depression remember this, if you so conduct yourselves in the simplicity of the gospel, as to gain the confidence of the pious females of your congregations; if you surround yourselves with a *shield of mothers' hearts*, you will be safe from all the assaults of your adversaries."

With the commencement of Dr. Porter's pastoral relations, began a course of effort to imbue his church with systematic *doctrinal* instruction. On their being *rooted and grounded* in the truth, depended entirely his hope of ultimate success. He had too much native discernment, and had too faithfully studied the Word of God, to anticipate permanent union in feeling and action, without union in sentiment; or to hope that without such union, the Holy Spirit would accompany his ministrations extensively, with saving energy. On this subject his views are thus expressed in a letter:—"The state of the church at ———, is such as that of every church must be, when merely associated at the communion table, without explicit union in any declared articles of faith, and without any explicit covenant obligations, hanging loosely together by a general, undefined influence of the pulpit. Oh, it grieves my heart to see such an assemblage of men and women miscalled a church. I do not wonder that Gideon, when going to fight Midian and Amalek, because 'the people were too many,' dismissed the promiscuous multitude, choosing to rely on *three hundred* true hearted men. Washington would gladly have done the same thing at Hærlem heights, when one half of his militia scarcely knew a musket from a broom-stick. What *can* a minister

do, surrounded by Christians who are strangers to Christianity. 'The people are *too many*,' the church doors are *too wide*. Too much reliance is placed on *numbers*, too little on *character*. Knowledge, piety, zeal, love—not *numbers*, give strength to a church. God cannot bless a church that has no fellowship of hearts, no discipline. At best, the richest blessing He can bestow on it is, to send His Spirit like a mighty, rushing wind, to overturn it from the bottom."

Next to systematic doctrinal instruction, as a means of promoting growth in piety, Dr. Porter relied on activity in Christian effort. He made it, therefore, one of his first objects as a pastor, to keep the energies of his church actively employed. A plan of a society is found among his papers, evidently of an early date, from which a few paragraphs are quoted, in confirmation of this remark.

"God has made every man responsible for the use or abuse of his influence among his fellow men. To the whole extent of that influence, he is sacredly bound to promote the happiness of others, and to set his face against those practices which tend to interrupt the public prosperity, or to destroy the health, reputation, or usefulness of individuals. In a world overspread with depravity—where sinful passions often triumph over all regard to interest, conscience, reason, and religion, many have been hurried on to shame and ruin, who perhaps might have been saved, by a single admonition seasonably and faithfully administered. Many a promising youth has been blasted by a slow progress in iniquity, which might have been easily checked. Many a parent's heart has bled over a child betrayed by temptation, and lost to himself and the world: betrayed perhaps by the example of that *same parent*. In such a state of things, which will always,

more or less exist in this world, much good may be done by a single individual of proper character. Much more may be done by a society of such individuals, united upon benevolent and honorable principles, actuated by a steady, sound judgment, and elevated above the reproaches of trifling or depraved minds. 'Vice is a cowardly thing. It will soon shrink before those who boldly oppose it.' Though the laws of this State against 'vice and immorality' are excellent, they cannot in *all cases* reach the *root* of those evils which spring up in society; nor in *any* case can they effectually restrain these evils, unless the sound part of the community afford a vigorous support to executive officers. Impressed with these sentiments, a number of individuals in Washington hereby associate in the form of a *moral society.*

"At each meeting the clerk shall read over the following list of inquiries to be attended to.

"Is there any case of special *poverty* among us? What is the cause of it? Can any remedy be devised?

"Is there any case of special *affliction?* Can any relief be afforded?

"Is there any case of *contention?* What may be done to heal it?

"Is there any special disorder in morals, or manners? What may be done to suppress it?

"If mild and prudent persuasion should prove ineffectual, we will, without *scruple* or *ceremony* inform against any merchant or other person, that we shall know to have violated the laws in relation to the sale of ardent spirits. And if, upon proper representation, the society become satisfied, that any merchant encourages idleness and intemperance by giving away spirits promiscuously, we will wholly withdraw the custom of our families from the store where this is done, till there shall be good evidence

of reformation; unless in some exempt case, the society shall allow a departure from this latter regulation."

Dr. Porter adopted the mode of preaching best suited to impress on his hearers correct and connected views of scriptural doctrine. It is the less necessary to attempt an *extended* analysis of his mode of sermonizing, since in his Lectures on Preaching, he has presented at length the rules which he deemed it advisable others should follow. It would be injustice to him to suppose that he did not conform his own practice to the rules he prescribed for others.

His discourses were in sentiment decidedly evangelical; in structure simple; in style perspicuous, chaste, and vigorous; in argument candid and convincing; in spirit serious, affectionate, and earnest; in application direct, pungent, powerful. Above all efforts at display, his sermons prepared in the ordinary course of ministerial duty, are marked by a clear and affecting exhibition of Christ and him crucified; often bringing to view the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel in a manner adapted alike to show the perfections of God, and the character and obligations of moral agents. In general they will appropriately fall into the class which, in his lectures, he has chosen to denominate *doctrino-practical.* They were generally *written* in full, but in the early part of his ministry, in a small hand, and with numerous abbreviations—an error in consequence of which much of his early labor was lost: and against which he used to caution his pupils, advising them in preparing their sermons to employ a fair hand, and an open page. He was systematic both in his choice of subjects, and his mode of discussion. He *read* and *thought*, to use his own expression, as a preacher, and all his intellectual exercises had reference to this one grand business of his life. He was accustomed

in his general reading, to keep memoranda of interesting facts, in a blank book always at hand for the purpose, with the view of increasing the richness and instructiveness of his sermons. He once remarked to the writer, that "if there was any thing attractive in his sermons, it was chiefly owing, in his view, to the variety and appropriateness of illustration which, by this process, he had acquired the ability to employ"—an opinion in which most will concur who enjoyed frequent opportunities of hearing his pulpit performances. His sermons were occasionally enlivened by the introduction of exquisite *moral* painting.

In this connection a fact ought perhaps to be stated, of some interest in the early history of Dr. Porter's vocal powers. For some time after he commenced preaching he paid comparatively little attention to their cultivation, the result of which was a monotony so inveterate as to awaken solicitude lest through the force of habit, he might loose the ability to modulate his voice. This solicitude led to the determination, that he would, whatever labor it might require, break up the habits he had contracted, and gain such command of his voice as he deemed indispensable to the highest effect in public speaking. He made the effort; but found it indispensable to complete success, entirely to remodel his style of writing. An additional motive to persevere in this determination, was furnished after a few years, by the enfeebled state of his lungs, which compelled him either to relinquish public speaking, or to limit with great precision the quantity of his voice in the pulpit. The *control* of his vocal powers which he eventually obtained, is perhaps acquired, to an equal extent, by but few in any profession, though the debilitated state of his system obviously much diminished the attractiveness and power of his delivery. Indeed he says in reference to this point,—"My animal frame has seldom been able for many years, to sustain that degree of emotion which is

often desirable in the pulpit, and a sense of duty has required me to restrain those feelings, on which the satisfaction and success of a preacher's labors greatly depend."

Dr. Porter's parochial labors were performed with *system.* He frequently announced from the pulpit his intended visits to particular districts of his parish, that his people might be in readiness to receive him, and thus prevent a waste of time. On such occasions, his easy, unostentatious, and uniformly kind deportment, secured him a cordial welcome as a friend, while his benevolent regard for their best interests, won him their confidence and affection in the more sacred character of an ambassador from God. The passing events of Providence he rarely failed to improve, to the spiritual advantage of his people. The very determination that they should be thus improved, exerted upon himself a salutary influence, inciting him to habits of careful observation; of wakefulness and diligence.

The seal of divine approbation was placed on his labors from the commencement of his ministry, in a gradual but steady increase of his church; especially in the improvement of its spiritual character. It was not however, until the eighth year of his ministry that his people were visited with a general revival. He now felt that he was gathering the fruits of protracted and anxious labor, and that no part of the harvest should be lost which human instrumentality could secure. During this season probably, was laid the foundation of the bodily suffering, from which he was scarcely allowed exemption, even for a day, to the close of his life. The account of this revival written by himself, and published in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, is subjoined, as tending happily to illustrate the aspect of his character we are now considering; especially as exhibiting his views, feelings, and practice, while passing

through a scene full of interest to every faithful pastor's heart;—a scene, of which as connected with similar scenes in other communities, his subsequent publications prove him to have been an anxious and accurate observer.

"To the Editors of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.

"Gentlemen,

"Want of health has hitherto prevented any communication from me, respecting the late special work of God in this place. The same cause still requires me to be less particular, in the details of that work, than, in other circumstances, might have been desirable. Many things which, at the time, conspired to interest the heart, have now lost their impression. No more than a general outline can be attempted: and this, consistently with our obligations to infinite mercy, cannot be withheld. Though this church has enjoyed a preached gospel, with very little interruption, since its formation, a period of sixty-four years, nothing that could properly be termed a revival of religion, had ever taken place, until the present. In the vacancy, immediately preceding my ordination, there was, in one part of the society, more than usual attention; and a number united with the church. In the three succeeding years, including 1799, twenty-three persons more were added. During the four next years, only ten persons made a public profession of religion. Death and removals were rapidly thinning our numbers; and there was room for solemn apprehension, that soon a solitary few would meet at the communion table; and our Zion be left to mourn that by multitudes, her 'solemn feasts and her Sabbaths were forgotten.'—Though this people have long been accustomed to a decent attendance on public worship, and though as free, probably, as almost any other, from open immoralities; it ought to be acknowledged with humility, that, at the period above

mentioned, the influence of vital religion amongst us, was externally low. Many hearts were locked up in impenetrable stupidity. Many families had no altar for God. Many parents seem to behold their dear offspring going in the ways that lead to destruction, without uttering one warning or offering one prayer, for their eternal salvation. *Out* of the church, was to be seen a general carelessness —*in* it, a spirit of deep slumber; want of discipline; want of active, brotherly love; want of Christian watchfulness, faithfulness, prayerfulness; want of every thing almost, but a cold, *cold profession.* My heart *aches*, at the remembrance; and trembles, under the apprehension that such a season may return.

"A glimmering hope of better things was enjoyed, for a short time, in the winter of 1801. A weekly church conference was attended regularly, about two months; when it declined, till it entirely ceased. The same unpleasant result attended every similar undertaking, the winter following. After a few weeks, some other object engrossed the attention, and the conference was forgotten. At a leisure season, and on one of the finest evenings in the year, when it was to have been attended at my house, not an individual came. It seemed as though an offended God were about to seal us up under the holy rebuke, "*sleep on now and take your rest.*"—That the only hope of self-destroying men is the sovereign mercy of God, I had long believed and often felt in some measure, but had never so *deeply* felt before. Means, however, were not to be neglected. For several years, previous to this, endeavors had been used to interest the church in behalf of the rising generation. Early in the summer of 1802, special meetings were appointed for the youth: but not until the express approbation and support of the church had been engaged in favor of the object: as it was foreseen that without this,

no permanent good would be effected. These meetings were attended every other week, in the form of a *theological school.* At each meeting, a question, in the order of a system, was given: accompanied with an extemporary lecture; or with notice that a sermon would be adapted to the subject, on the following Sabbath. When the latter course was taken, an unusual attention was apparent in the youth, as well as in many others. At the meeting, succeeding that on which the question was given, the papers that had been written by the youth, were received and read publicly. After a number of practical, solemn remarks on the last question, another was given, in the same manner. From respect to the delicacy of the writers, their papers were received so as to leave the author of each one unknown to every other. With the same precaution, they were returned; having been reviewed at leisure, such corrections or remarks as were thought necessary, being made on them in writing. —These meetings, begun with faint expectations, succeeded to my joy and astonishment. They, in some degree, substituted solid improvement for the ordinary levities of young people: they excited a relish for profitable conversation, reading, and reflection: they furnished the mind with useful ideas, not only increased, but rendered the more *permanent* by the labor of acquiring them: and what is most important of all, they opened an avenue for the solemn influence of truth, by a divine blessing, to reach the conscience and the heart. A respectable number usually attended on these occasions; and twelve or fifteen often wrote on the same question. It was surprising to witness the progress, made by some of these, not only in correct writing, but in doctrinal knowledge. For three successive summers these pleasant and profitable meetings were continued; when it was the will of an holy God to suspend them, through my impaired health. To

that will I desire to bow submissively, while I feel this allotment as the severest trial of my life.

"Near the close of the summer 1803, things began to wear a brighter aspect. Several persons became seriously impressed. At the request of six or eight brethren of the church, weekly conferences were revived. There was, thenceforward, no more difficulty to maintain them. During the winter, the operations of the divine Spirit were discernible, in a part of the society. The church, which had appeared to languish, as with a wasting hectic, put on the aspect of returning health. Through the next spring and summer, though thirteen had been added to Christ's visible family, we were still betwixt hope and fear. God's people *longed* for a revival, rather than expected it. Scarcely did they dare to believe that so blessed a season was already begun; and that the day had indeed dawned, which was to succeed a night of more than sixty years. In the autumn, the Sun of Righteousness arose upon us, with healing and salvation in his wings. As in another 'valley of the son of Hinnom,' there was a great shaking. Dry bones animated by the breath of the Almighty, stood up new-born believers. Numbers, like the smitten Saul were ready to say: 'Lord what wilt thou have us to do?' While the children of Zion, beheld with overflowing hearts, and with thankful tongues acknowledged, 'This is the finger of God.' The work was stamped, conspicuously, with the impress of its Divine Author: and its joyful effects, evinced no other than the agency of omnipotence. Every Sabbath exhibited the striking contrast betwixt a time of stupidity and a time of attention, among a people. Many who had frequented the sanctuary from custom, or curiosity, unmoved by all that is joyful or alarming in the gospel; whose attention had been more occupied with a *new face*, or a *new fashion*, than with the eternal interests of their

own souls, were now in the attitude of anxious and solemn inquirers, listening to the instructions of the pulpit. At conferences, people collected as though awake and in earnest. Even those, whom age and infirmity might well have excused, were often seen miles from home, at an evening meeting. On some of these occasions, the crowd which came together, reminded one of the assembly in Capernaum, when 'there was not room to receive them, no, not so much as about the doors.' Before the beginning of winter, the solemnity had extended to almost every part of the place. So manifestly was it the work of God, that opposition, however it might have rankled in the bosom of individuals, was awed into silence. Many old professors, amidst the majesty and glory of the scene, seemed unable to contain, and equally unable to express, the wonder and joy of their hearts. In *them*, slumber, at such a season, could hardly have been less than the lethargy of death. Thursday lectures, principally preached by neighboring ministers, were attended for several months with great solemnity and profit. A weekly prayer meeting was also set up; which is since devoted to a special remembrance of the rising generation, the first week in every month. During a winter, unusually severe, nothing could surpass the resolution with which numbers attended to be instructed in the way of salvation. From the extremity of the season, apprehensions were entertained for persons of delicate constitutions: but the people were seldom, or never more healthy.

"As the fruit of this precious and memorable season, fifty-four persons have been added to the church, none of whom, *blessed be God*, have, in their subsequent conduct, been left to discredit their holy profession.* In conse-

* A valuable testimony to the importance of doctrinal instruction. Dr. Porter used to mention the fact, when speaking of the lamentable defections of hopeful converts in more modern revivals, that

quence of such an accession, the situation of the church was thought to require that two new deacons should be chosen. This occasion, while it exhibited a prevailing, and very pleasing unanimity in the church, was rendered the more interesting by a rare concurrence of circumstances. The vote of the brethren designated two young men to the office, twin-brothers, very exactly resembling each other, having joined the church together about ten years before; and having married sisters, who are also sisters in the church.

"It would be more important to delineate, particularly, the nature and fruits of this work, did it not bear so strong affinity, in these respects, to the revivals once and again described heretofore in your Magazine. Without an exception, its special subjects were calm, and silent in their exercises; and embraced that system of religious sentiments commonly acknowledged and received in our churches. Before this awakening, it was sometimes with difficulty that we could sing a sacramental hymn. After so many dear and promising youth, and among these so respectable a portion of the singers, had been called into the church, our next communion left impressions in many bosoms, which can never, *never* be effaced. Cold must have been the heart, on that occasion, not to have felt what words cannot express. The recollection of these scenes excites joy; but joy mingled with pain. Alas! that any, who are perishing with a mortal disease, should slight so fair an opportunity to find the great Physician, and the healing balm of the gospel! That season of special mercy is past; we have too many, and too mournful evidences that it *is past*. At least a thousand precious immortal souls remain, whose situation it becomes not a

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during his ministry, not one, to his knowledge, whom he had regarded as giving evidence of piety, ever ceased to afford that evidence.

fallible fellow-creature to decide, but who, at present, do not profess to have any solid grounds of hope, beyond the grave. Oh, that the God of mercy may vouchsafe his gracious and powerful presence to this dear flock; and that this time of solemn and sweet refreshing, may be but the spring of a more prosperous summer, and a more glorious harvest!

"From the commencement of this work to its visible decline, was more than eighteen months. One thing which it has impressed more deeply than ever on my mind, is the benefit of religious conferences. These meetings, though frequent, seemed not at all to interfere with necessary, temporal employments. An increased industry could easily redeem the time devoted to this purpose, from unprofitable or foolish pursuits. Such as have been the real and happy subjects of this work, and have so often met to pray, and praise, and converse, when they shall be numbered with the saints of the Most High, in the glories of his everlasting kingdom, will doubtless remember with transport, these small portions of time, big with eternal joy. In days like these, lowering with dark prospects over the church, and over the world, Christians, especially Christians who can meet in one half hour, most certainly ought not to live like strangers.

"The religious instruction of children and youth is another subject, the importance of which has been rendered more strikingly apparent in this revival. Of the number, added to the church, about three-fourths had sprung from professedly pious parents. Before this season, as is mentioned above, more than ordinary attention had been paid to the rising generation. Beside the meetings of the young people, the church, *as a church*, had appointed a catechising committee, to assist the pastor in teaching the children. These catechisings have been since regularly attended, during the summer season, between the

services on every other Sabbath; the children being classed according to their knowledge.*

"The period from twelve to twenty is eminently the learning and the forming age. Perhaps no other equal period, so often determines the character for life and the state for eternity. Still this golden period is often spent so as to be no better, or even worse than a blank. Little is learned but what requires the labor of a life to unlearn. Ought not something to be done, or at least seriously attempted, for a reformation in this respect? While infidelity is searching out every avenue for infusing its deadly poison into the minds of the young, is it not matter of concern and surprise, that their religious instruction should not have had more share in the thoughts, the conversation, the prayers of God's people? Do not the signs of the times summon ministers and Christians generally to exertions more united, and more correspondent with an object of such acknowledged and immense importance? Surely it is no reason for Zion's friends to count up discouragements and to fold their hands in sloth, surrounded as they are with such alarming proofs that Zion's foes neither slumber nor sleep. Does not sin lie at the door of our churches? Is not one

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"* In the fall of the year there is an annual catechising, when every child that has attended the stated catechisings, through the season, receives some religious tract, purchased with money drawn from the church treasury, and corresponding in value with the child's progress. The names of such as learn the catechism through, are also entered on the church records. This is designed both as a direct excitement to the children, and as a document, which may be interesting at future periods of this church. It is found that the catechisings of the church, of families, and schools, mutually promote each other. From the register of the schools, in which is preserved their comparative improvements in the various branches of instruction, it appears that in six of our district schools, examined in the close of the last winter, the number of children that were able to repeat the Assembly's Catechism through, was 101."

important end of infant baptism too much forgotten? If it is a grand design of this ordinance 'to draw the cares and prayers of the whole Christian church, towards the rising generation and their everlasting concerns; to hold them up perpetually before our eyes, and to fix them habitually upon our hearts,' I apprehend that no subject of equal magnitude is so lamentably neglected.

"I am, gentlemen, very respectfully, yours &c.

"E. PORTER."

"*Washington, Aug.* 11, 1806."

The results of a plan of labor like that adopted by Dr. Porter, it could not be expected would be fully realized during so short a ministry as his. Much of his strength was expended in the execution of the first part of his plan. Had he continued his pastoral labors, his hopes, by the blessing of God, would doubtless have been realized in the conversion of many souls; in the formation of a numerous, intelligent, stable, and active church; and in the diffusion of a healthful moral influence through all the relations of society. To this his efforts were obviously tending. Doubtless there will be difference of opinion respecting the expediency of conducting labors so much with reference to *ultimate* results. By many this reference will be thought disproportionate, since a pastor's designs may be frustrated by various contingencies, which human agency cannot control. However this question may be decided, the recent history of some of our churches furnishes conclusive evidence, that ministerial labor may be conducted with a disproportionate reference to *immediate* effects.

Dr. Porter possessed a native fondness for study, which as a minister he felt himself bound to cherish. At his settlement he told his people that as he was young he

must study to be in the highest degree useful to them; and as a preliminary step, he claimed the right, and secured the admission of the claim on their part, of the entire control of his time. To love of study he united habits of patient and persevering application, formed under the determination, by divine assistance, to "show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed." The course of study he prescribed for himself was enlarged, and was pursued with corresponding decision and industry. He tasked himself to devote twelve hours a day to professional study. In performing this task, he often allowed himself to encroach upon time which should have been devoted to sleep,—a practice which he afterwards regarded as having been very injurious to him, and against which he was wont earnestly to warn his pupils. It would seem, indeed, from a resolution on a former page, that he came to view the practice not merely as inexpedient, but as sinful.

His views of duty as a minister of Christ, led him also to seek improvement in the society of intelligent and pious men; to be scrupulously punctual in attending the meetings of his clerical brethren, and other public meetings for religious or literary purposes. Of these meetings he was an interested, active member, shrinking from no responsibility which it was clearly the will of God he should sustain. And in his frequent calls to important and difficult service, his brethren sufficiently evinced their confidence in his ability and Christian principles. Among the means of improvement he most highly prized while a pastor, was a meeting composed of several brethren in the ministry, of feelings kindred to his own. To the meetings of this body he often referred as seasons peculiarly rich in spiritual and intellectual enjoyment; and unhesitatingly ascribed much of his

usefulness as a writer, a preacher, and an instructor, to their influence.

The compiler has been at considerable pains to ascertain definitely the exercises of this meeting which Dr. Porter prized so highly, but has not learned that, in number or character, they differed essentially from those of similar meetings which clergymen have frequently formed for mutual improvement. The characteristics of the meeting which contributed especially to its usefulness, appear to have been these:—Its recurrence was frequent—once a month; and each member was expected to task his powers to the utmost, in preparing for its exercises. These were so arranged as fully to employ the moral as well as the intellectual powers; and each member was obligated to benefit his brethren by a frank and fraternal exposure of such faults as he believed would unfavorably affect their growth in piety, their reputation, or usefulness. Other gentlemen who have since occupied stations of much responsibility in the church, will doubtless unite with the subject of this Memoir, in acknowledging their indebtedness to this meeting. In writing to one of them, many years afterwards, Dr. Porter remarks, "It occurred to me while reading your review, that your training to the pen, in our old monthly meeting, had further ends than you were then aware of."

A trait of Dr. Porter's ministerial character which perhaps deserves to be mentioned, was a delicate sense of propriety, exhibited in his performances when called to take part with his brethren on public occasions; as at ordinations, anniversaries, &c. Whatever the duty assigned him at such times, it was rare, indeed, that his matter, style, or length, furnished ground of complaint. His own views of the importance of appropriateness to clothe religious services with the highest interest on any occasion, he labored to impress upon his church; and that

he might train them to correct habits in this respect, he used in certain social meetings, to assign to individuals subjects of prayer, to which their petitions were to be confined, with the understanding that he would freely point out their failures, and thus aid them in the work of self-discipline. Of the want of appropriateness in the performances of his clerical brethren, on occasions like those named, he sometimes spoke in terms of decided disapprobation. The insertion here of the following remarks on this subject, written for the Panoplist, but never, as we believe, communicated for publication, may in some degree subserve the end for which they were prepared.

To the Editor of the Panoplist.

"Sir,

"The ordination of a minister is one of the most momentous transactions that men or angels can be called to witness. Every thing pertaining to it ought to be done decently and in order. I beg leave to occupy a page in your useful miscellany with remarks upon certain defects which I have sometimes observed in the method of conducting this interesting solemnity.

"I think the religious services are often, perhaps commonly, too long. If these services were all performed by one minister, he might more probably confine each to its proper limits as to time and matter: but these limits are apt to be forgotten when according to custom and propriety, the several parts are assigned to different men. Every speaker rises to perform his part with the same general impressions of the whole subject, and yielding to these impressions, is, almost of course, drawn into undue length. The *first prayer*, for example, instead of being confined to the few thoughts that are appropriate at the commencement of the public exercises, is sometimes extended through eight or ten minutes, anticipating all

the topics that belong to the prayer of consecration. The *right hand of fellowship*, instead of being an affectionate address to the new Pastor, concisely introduced with general remarks, often interferes with the province of the *charge*, and not unfrequently includes a diffuse address to the people. In many cases, the same remark as to undue length, applies to the *charge*, and the *concluding prayer:* and sometimes the *sermon* continues an hour, which in my opinion is at least one quarter too long."

Respecting his *reputation* as a man, and especially as a minister, Dr. Porter ever entertained a lively concern. In his view it was not enough that a minister's reputation should be unblemished; it should be above suspicion. The reader of the preceding narrative cannot have failed to notice his solicitude to prevent unkind feelings, and evil surmisings among his people, towards him as their pastor, and towards those who thought it his duty to leave his charge for another field of labor. Whether he remained with his people or not, he considered it equally important that they should confide in the purity of his motives; since a suspicion of his integrity would unavoidably impair their confidence in his successor, and in the whole body of ministers. For the same reason he carefully avoided making such requisitions on the services of others, whether just or not, as would needlessly excite their prejudices, and diminish their regard for ministerial character. His feelings on this subject are thus expressed in a letter to his wife,—"My spirit of mechanical invention, which has so often stood me in stead at home and abroad, has of late been especially useful. For example, on entering my little chamber, where a fire is made for me this evening, my first care is to wedge my window-sashes, so that their rattling shall not prevent my sleep, nor their open crevices expose me to currents of air. My next care

is to provide myself a wooden substitute for tongs, and another for snuffers. I might indeed ask and perhaps obtain these little accommodations, and my charges are sufficient to justify the claim. But I never allow myself to forget, on these occasions, that I am a minister of the gospel; and probably am recognized as such by my dress and manners, even among strangers. This consideration is always present to my mind on a journey. In one case, when an ostler had administered some remedies to the inflamed eye of my horse, having forgotten to remunerate him, I wrote back sixty miles to a friend, to do this in my behalf. Had I belonged to another profession, I should not have done it. On the same principle, I consider the payment of debts, little or great, more scrupulously to demand my attention, than if I were a secular man." Do not the principles and practice of the author of this letter rebuke some of his brethren? Have not some ministers of the gospel, indulged the feeling that they are *ex officio* privileged to expect peculiar attentions, and to disregard minute things in manners, or in dealing, which are acknowledged to be binding on others; and a neglect of which, would in their own view, be a blemish in others? Does not this feeling sometimes manifest itself in the apparent expectation, that pecuniary obligations will be considered less sacredly binding on them than on men of a different employment. "To the minister of the gospel," Dr. Porter remarks in the conclusion of one of his sermons, "I would say, be at all times, and on all occasions a man of integrity. Beware that you do not feel exempted by your office or employment from obligations which bind all Christians and all men, to probity and punctuality in the fulfilment of *pecuniary* engagements."

Activity for the good of Zion was not a less prominent trait of Dr. Porter's professional, than of his Christian

character. He was active in devising expedients to promote piety among his people, and equally so in executing more extended plans of benevolence, whether originating in his own mind, or in the counsels and the prayers of others. He was happily exempt from that narrow pride which induces one to attach special merit to a course of action, because it bears the impress of his own wisdom or zeal. Nothing was needful to secure his prayers, his co-operation, and his contributions in behalf of any proposed plan of Christian effort, except evidence that it was demanded by the honor of God and the well-being of men; was wisely projected, and was feasible. The results of his labors impressively teach what singleness of purpose, united with untiring industry may effect, though depressed by debility and suffering. The employment of preaching he ardently loved, and failed not even when journeying, if his health would allow, to improve every suitable opportunity, as Christ's ambassador to address his fellow men. As disease preyed upon his vitals, and undermined his constitution, he was compelled oftener to decline solicitations to this service. So susceptible did his lungs become, of impression from a change of atmosphere, that for years a slight variation of temperature often entirely disqualified him to officiate in public, or to speak with ease in conversation. For several years, indeed, it was with difficulty, in his best state of health, that he performed without aid the labors of a single public service; and for two years before his decease he rarely preached at all. His last sermon was preached in the South Parish of Braintree, Mass., in September 1833, from Daniel vi. 10,—a sermon afterwards printed with his Lectures on Homiletics, &c. It was with the utmost difficulty that he spoke at this time, being unable to utter a sentence without an obvious effort of the vital organs.

To Dr. Porter's solicitude, while a pastor, for the purity of his church in sentiment and practice, we have already had occasion to allude. Entertaining the belief that correct practice can be expected only in connection with correct sentiments, he attached the highest importance to the general diffusion of standard, theological writings. In aid of this object he cheerfully devoted his pen, his money, and his influence. During the early part of his ministry, his fears were awakened by an undue tendency among ministers and Christians to theological *speculation*. This, at a later period, was succeeded by an increased tendency to *action*, which was accompanied with at least an equally increased fondness for novelty and innovation. In the solicitude respecting the peculiar dangers which, as the result of this state of things, threatened the prosperity of Zion, originated his Letters on Revivals.

The theological views of Dr. Porter were of the same general character as those entertained by Edwards, and Bellamy, and Smalley, and by the ministers whose agency was most conspicuous in the numerous and interesting revivals about the beginning of this century.—They were decidedly *evangelical*. These views were distinctly and fearlessly expressed, and decidedly maintained, in the pulpit and in conversation. Yet he was not a controversialist. Having no predilection for controversy, and believing that his energies might be more profitably employed, he abstained almost entirely from public participation in it. Still he was not of the number who believe that silence respecting prevailing theological errors is expedient, especially when those errors are likely to gain currency through respect for the Christian and professional character of their advocates. Did he see error clad in fair disguise, followed by evil results or obviously tending to such results, he deemed it his duty as a faithful

watchman, to utter the language of reproof or caution. For the same reasons, he deemed it his duty to encourage and sustain those who were willing, on the field of controversy to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; and he took a deep interest in all those controversies in which the cardinal doctrines of religion were brought into discussion. It cannot be disguised that in this light he viewed the controversy which arose during the last years of his life, respecting the system of religious sentiments commonly denominated "New-Haven Theology." Though the writer is aware, as already intimated, that Dr. Porter was not disposed publicly to engage in this controversy, he also knows from personal acquaintance with his views and feelings, that he felt on this subject a most lively solicitude,—a solicitude, not a vague transient excitement; but awakened by a conviction, the result of deliberate, protracted, and prayerful investigation, that some of the fundamental truths of the gospel were assailed, through undue attachment to favorite metaphysical theories. On several points in this system, Dr. Porter's views were distinctly, though briefly expressed in his correspondence with Rev. Bennet Tyler, D. D., President of the Theological Seminary at East Windsor, Conn., and with an Association for the promotion of Revivals, at that time existing in the Seminary at Andover. That the statement of his views may be full and distinct, it is presented to the reader, as gathered from both these sources. The fact that the correspondence with the Revival Association has already been published, will not, it is presumed, in the view of most readers, detract from the value of the extracts which it is proposed here to insert. To Rev. Dr. Tyler, he writes :—

"*Andover, October* 8, 1829.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"From some remarks which dropped when you and brother ——— were in my study, I have supposed that both you and he have much the same views *of Dr. Taylor's speculative theology* as I have. That he was very much dissatisfied last May, I know from his strong declarations; and his inquietude I presume cannot have been diminished by the subsequent character of the Spectator. Since that time too, I know that such men as the Princeton Professors, Dr. ———, Dr. Hyde of Lee, ———, ———, &c. &c., are seriously dissatisfied.

"Without time to enter into particulars, my difficulty is that his note to his sermon, his views of native depravity, of means and regeneration, are virtually Arminian; at least that they will be so understood as to bring up a race of young preachers, thoroughly anti-Calvinistic.

"Now what is to be done? Shall we sustain our Calvinism, or see it run down to the standard of Methodists and laxer men?—It is time that a note of remonstrance be struck up somewhere; it would instantly ring through the country."

"*St. Augustine, Feb.* 4, 1830.

"Dear Brother,

"Your pamphlet reached me two days ago, by packet from Charleston, through the agency of brother ———, who read my copy, and then forwarded it. Another copy or two I expect shortly from Mrs. Porter. The spirit, the sentiment, the execution of the pamphlet I like much. I expected a good thing, and it is better than I expected.

"It is four or five years since I warned brother ——— against the spirit of speculation that was growing up in Connecticut. Two years ago, I began to feel alarmed as to his own theories. More recently I have had several

free conversations with him, and my fears have been allayed by assurances from him that he should hereafter preach the parts of Calvinism, against which the unsanctified heart revolts, and which on mature deliberation, he did not think it his duty to preach earlier in ———. I objected to him, that Calvinism has two legs, the agency of God, and the agency of man; he had made it walk on one, and thus had given to it the halting gate of Thersites, instead of the majestic march of Achilles. He admitted this partial exhibition and justified it, as the case has been, but promised to change his course. The grand danger of brother ——— is too much reliance on means. He and ——— are both virtually in the old 'moral suasion' system. He plumply denies that the more the unregenerate man sees of God, the more he hates his character; and objects, not so heedlessly indeed as Arminians and infidels have done, that it must, if that were true, be the worst thing we could do to preach the gospel to them.

"Dr. Taylor's closing No. on Means, was a designed modification of the former ones, partly on the suggestion of ———. The latter told him, that he had employed terms badly in speaking of the 'suspension of selfishness.' All that T. means, said he to me, is that the carnal mind is held in check, or does not *act*, not that it is extinct. 'While this carnal mind is thus checked, has it moral qualities?' said I. 'Doubtless.' 'Is it sinful, or holy, or neither?' (Pause.) 'The man is doubtless a sinner.' 'Can one, who pugnaciously and ostentatiously maintains, that all sin consists in *action*, maintain too that a carnal mind is sinful while all its *action* has ceased?—(No reply.) The calmness, candor, and discrimination of your discussion will do good. Other men will now speak. Dr. T. cannot stand where he is. He

must either explain satisfactorily, or prove anew his system, or retract, or go down stream.

"As to the question which you touch upon, whether unrenewed sinners *do use means*, &c. I have no difficulty. They do nothing which God accepts as duty; nothing to which he has promised sanctifying grace. But they may do many things, which as God is accustomed to work, are *ordinarily* prerequisite to regeneration. e. g.—intellectual light, doctrinal instruction, conviction, feeling, may exist and commonly do, where God is about to sanctify the heart. A man with all these, may be more guilty than he was a month ago, or more than his neighbor; and yet Dr. Bellamy would say, he may be ten times or a hundred times more likely to be saved, than he *was*, or than his neighbor *is*.

"As to regeneration by *self-love*—no man or devil can be more depraved than to overlook God and the universe, and make *himself* his ultimate end.—Be of good courage, brother. The strength of the church and ministry are with you. The settled faith of the country must be defended."

"*Charleston, S. C. May* 1, 1830.

"My dear Brother,

"A letter from brother S——— soon after I wrote you from St. Augustine, had this passage,—'Dr. Tyler has published his pamphlet, a noble one too,—which has made an end of the matter as to brother Taylor's "regeneration by self-love;"—a full end; there is no redemption. All the fog is blown away, and we have at last a clear and sheer regeneration of the natural man by himself, stimulated by self-love, made out to be the scheme of brother Taylor; there is no getting aside of it. Brother Taylor must now sing his *παλινῴδη*, or go further and plunge deeper. I hope for the *παλινῴδη*, but I fear the *διατριβη*.'

I quote this because it accords so perfectly with my own views, and because brother S——— has been claimed by Dr. T. as on his side.

"Dr. Taylor's views of self-love cannot stand inquiry. His 'true benevolence'—'love to God,' 'in its most elementary form,'—is what?—regard to one's own happiness. Fuller in his 'Gospel its own Witness,' shows this to be an infidel sentiment; and Smalley, vol. 1st of his Sermons, shows that Satan is innocent, if ultimate regard to self is no sin. As to suspension of the selfish principle, he is in real straits. He has a sinner using means, for some 'definable time,' without moral qualities, and so not a moral agent;—or using means *no time* at all, that is, *not using means;* for time is of course definable. Besides, all his illustrations suppose the sinner using means, to do what occupies time—considering, comparing, &c. Did such a sinner ever listen to a sermon in less than a moment? What would Dr. Taylor say to an assembly of unregenerate men—not using means? 'Keep away from the sanctuary,' or 'repent?' Let him solve his own difficulties, and he solves mine. Indeed I have none; for while I tell the sinner—'repent'—and assure him that he is guilty for every moment of impenitence—he does no *duty* in listening to me, but he does what God may employ as a *means*, and ordinarily as indispensably prerequisite to his regeneration."

"*Andover, May* 3, 1832.

"Dear Brother,

"In a long letter to Mr. ———, just written, I say: 'The controversy is lamentable enough, God knows;—but the responsibility be on the few men, who against many a sober remonstrance, as I can bear witness, refused to let alone this contention before it was meddled with. We concede to them the right to impugn the faith of the

Pilgrims, if they will; and also to think and say that they do not do it;—but cannot concede to them the right to *think* and *say*, for themselves and us too.'

"The review of ———, pushes him, either off his own ground, or on to '*self-determining power!*' I should no sooner have looked for the theories of our 'new men,' on this point, after the demonstration of its absurdity by Edwards, than that the Copernican System should be assailed, or the properties of the circle and triangle, settled in science for centuries, should be called in question. Hold on with good courage. God calls you to speak."

"*Andover, Aug.* 8, 1832.

"Dear Brother,

"Why cannot Dr. T. come out honestly and say what he believes as to the necessary independence of a moral agent on divine influence? The Arminian says God could not secure universal holiness 'without infringing free agency.' Dr. T. evidently means just so, but he is ambiguous—hypothetical;—says, 'you have no proof *a priori*'—and looks well to his *italics* as his refuge. Can he prove *a priori* that God can secure *any* holiness?

"On the late hobby distinction between *doctrines* and *theory* or *philosophy* of religion, I could write a sheet or two. I said to ———, give me this door which ——— has opened, and I will bring *all* the churches of ——— to meet on one floor, as orthodox. Try the principle on the Trinity, and all that is essential to the truth, is easily laid aside under the head of *philosophy* or *theory*. Worse yet as to *atonement*, *regeneration*, &c., ——— in the Christian Register three or four weeks ago, just followed up the principle capitally, in behalf of Unitarians."

"*Charleston, S. C. Dec.* 8, 1832.

"My dear Sir,

"I wish our editors who are correct on *inability*, would so thoroughly keep up the settled distinction as to *natural* and *moral*, that Taylorites cannot misunderstand them. The mischief already done by these new theories is incalculable, at least in one respect. Our ministers, especially of the younger class, are *unsettled* in their faith. Too many of them, not with Taylor in sentiment, have imperceptibly come to feel that nothing is too well established to be called in question."

To the expression of Dr. Porter's theological views contained in the preceding extracts from his correspondence, is added the following from his concluding Letter on Revivals.

"*Christian preachers, who wish their ministrations to be blessed of God for the promotion of revivals, ought correctly to understand and represent the subject of* DIVINE INFLUENCE, *in the conversion of sinners.*

"This is a point concerning which God is jealous of his own prerogatives. The sanctification of the human heart, is so eminently the special work of his Spirit, that the minister who denies or but half believes the truth on this subject, or who substitutes for it some theory more flattering to human pride, is destined to labor amid spiritual barrenness. At any rate, he cannot see a genuine revival of religion, as the proper fruit of his own labors. At all periods indeed, individuals claiming to be orthodox, have entertained views more or less erroneous as to the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. But, for a long period, the faith of our Calvinistic churches, especially in New England, has been as much settled on this subject, as on any other in religion; and it would be just as reasonable at this day to revive all the debates of past ages

on the doctrine of *justification* or *atonement*, as on this. A spirit of bold speculation, however, has arisen in our time, and advanced theories respecting regeneration, the same in substance as those which have been often refuted and abandoned heretofore, but which being now advanced with the imposing air of novelty, are in my opinion dangerous to the interests of evangelical and experimental piety, just so far as they are embraced.

"Do you ask me to specify what I mean? It is reasonable that you should wish this; and I will endeavor to do it with as much clearness and brevity as I am able.

"One theory then to which I refer, is that which denies any *direct, divine influence* in regeneration, and ascribes the change wholly to *moral suasion.* This is an old error revived. It was familiar to my earliest theological studies; and through my whole ministry, though this sentiment has never had a single respectable advocate till lately, the reasons why I have thought it an error, and a serious one, have been the same that I shall now state.

"How does God operate on minds? Whatever range we may give to our speculations, I suppose all must come to this result, that it must be done by an influence either *mediate* or *immediate*, and that no mode of influence besides these two is conceivable.

"By *mediate* influence we mean that which attends the employment of second causes, operating according to the settled *laws of mind;*—as where instruction removes ignorance, argument produces conviction, and eloquence awakens emotion. There is a philosophical sense, in which the action of second causes on intelligent beings is properly ascribed to God; just as we say he *governs* the animal, vegetable, and planetary worlds by *laws appropriate to each.*

"By *immediate* influence we mean that which is direct, without the intervention of second causes. Calvinistic

preachers have always ascribed the renovation of a sinner in the large sense, to both these kinds of divine influence. When they speak of *conversion*, as including the Christian graces, or denoting the commencement and progress of holiness in the heart, they refer to the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, and also to the instrumentality of means. But when they speak of *regeneration*, as denoting merely the *commencement* of sanctification, and as being an instantaneous, not a progressive work, it is the *immediate* agency of God, and that only, to which they refer.

"You must be well aware that there are religious teachers now, of considerable name, who boldly aver that God does not, and cannot exert any other influence on the heart of a sinner than the *mediate* kind, which consists in the power of motives. A popular preacher has been accustomed to use language like the following: 'In renewing men, the Spirit employs means. He does not come and take right hold of the heart, and perform an operation upon it; but he presents motives; he persuades by means of truth, and the heart is overcome.'—'To change men's hearts, requires only the presentation of truth by the Spirit of God. His influence differs not at all from that of the preacher, except in degree.' Doubtless you have heard the sentiment maintained in the pulpit, or seen it in theological discussions, that 'the Spirit of God changes the sinners heart, just as *we* change a man's purpose in any case by *persuasion;* and that any direct influence, distinct from *moral suasion*, would be inconsistent with the laws of moral agency.

"To this theory I object in the *first place*, that it *contradicts the plain declarations of the Bible.* Not a twentieth part of the evidence on which I make this statement, can be or need be adduced here. 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul.' Ask any plain Christian to interpret this, and

he will tell you here was a direct divine influence on the heart of Lydia, not only distinct from the influence of means, but expressly *preparatory* to the access of this influence. 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will.' How is this? Suppose some one should ask, 'Does the Lord come, and *take right hold* of the king's heart?' Yes, doubtless, for it is '*in his hand.*'—Let such as feel a difficulty in this language, search for an interpretation. If there is a difficulty, common sense did not create it, and need not stop to explain it. But if illustration were needed, it might be found in one simple case of fact. Nehemiah prayed, with great importunity and perseverance, that the king of Babylon's heart might be 'turned,' to favor the rebuilding of Jerusalem. That heart was barricaded by policy, pride, and prejudice against the enterprize. But while no 'moral suasion' was brought to bear upon it, from argument and motives, or even from a knowledge of Nehemiah's prayers having been offered; it was effectually 'turned,' in answer to those prayers, by an invisible influence from heaven.

"'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined *in our hearts.*' How did God produce light? By the agency of Gabriel, or the instrumentality of other second causes? No, but by the immediate energy of his own word, 'Let there be light.' So in regeneration, he *shines in* our hearts; 'Let there be love to God.' Call this moral suasion, and what becomes of Paul's analogy, in which consists the whole significance of his language? Was light *persuaded* into existence, at the beginning? Paul preached to the Corinthian converts, but the light that shined *in their hearts*, was an immediate influence of the Holy Spirit.

"'Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' How was Isaiah *moved* in uttering predictions of

the Messiah? Certainly by a direct influence of the Holy Ghost, not by moral suasion. True the kind of influence in this case was very different from that employed in regeneration; but it shows that *immediate* access to a human mind, is not impossible to Him who made it, nor inconsistent with the laws of moral agency. Again,

"'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh *in you*, to will and to do, of his good pleasure.' How does God work *in* men's hearts, to produce holy volition and action? The theory says, by *motives*;—'just as one man's mind is influenced, in any case, by the *persuasion* of another.' But unperverted Christian experience says, 'An immediate, divine influence is superadded to the motives of the gospel.'

"I object to the theory of moral suasion, in the *second place*, because it subverts the scriptural doctrine of *depravity*. The question is, have the light and motives of the gospel, when exhibited to the sinner, the same power to change his *heart*, that argument has to influence his *judgment* in common cases? Suppose you state to him the common argument to prove the existence of God. He is an intelligent man; he sees the force of that argument fully; his understanding is convinced. But suppose you proceed, and set before this same man, with equal clearness, the *moral character* of God; do you, by the same process, bring him to *love* it? If so his opposition to God before, was not to his *true* character; it was founded in *mistake*. All he needed was intellectual light to correct his false views of God, and then he was predisposed to love him; for opposition to every false character of God, denotes a right, and not a criminal state of heart.

"Now this is not such a sinner as the Bible any where describes. Paul speaks of men who were opposed to God, not merely by intellectual mistake, but 'their *understand-*

ing was darkened, *because* of the *blindness of their heart.*' The Jews rejected the Messiah, not because the means of moral suasion were wanting, but in using these means, 'the *veil* was on their *hearts.*' And Christ speaks of them, not as predisposed to *love* the *true* character of God, if they had only been instructed so as to *see* it; 'Ye *have* both *seen* and *hated* both me and my Father.' The doctrine of Christ, as to the guilt of men, is, that they *have light* enough, but *love darkness.* The theory of moral suasion is, that they have no love of darkness, but such as light and motives will remove.

"I object, in the *third place*, to this theory, because it subverts the scriptural doctrine of *special grace.*

"'In regeneration,' it has been said, 'the sinner's heart is changed by the influence of truth and motives, presented by God;—just as one man's mind is changed in any case, by the *persuasion* of another.' How does the orator persuade his hearers? By appeals to their understanding, conscience, passions, interest, &c.; that is, by addressing principles that are *in* the men already—principles that are in *all* men. He operates on their minds by an *objective* influence; by the presentation of *external* motives, adapted to sway their purpose. This is all he *can* do. But is this all that *God* can do? He addresses men by the solemn motives of the gospel, through preaching, and other modes of presenting external means of persuasion. But is this all that he can do? Certainly not; for besides the presentation of motives through the instrumentality of second causes, he can exert an *immediate* influence on minds, such as no man has the power of exerting on another man; and this is the influence which he does exert in regeneration. To deny this is to deny *special grace.* For if regeneration is produced by an influence the same as that employed by one man on the mind of another, in common *persuasion*, certainly it is not in any sense a *supernatural*

work. It takes place according to the laws of nature, in the ordinary course of cause and effect.

"Why then is one sinner in an assembly regenerated, rather than others, who possess the same powers and principles of moral agency as he? An event occurs in this case, for which, according to the theory in question, there is *no reason.* A hundred men, of essentially the same intelligence and moral character, listen to the same sermon. God addresses them all by the voice of the preacher; but only one of the hundred is savingly renewed, and he by just the same influence, which is applied to all the rest without effect! On the theory of special grace, a good reason, (namely, the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit,) is to be assigned for this difference of result; but on the theory of moral suasion it is absolutely without any reason.

"The scriptural representations of Christians as 'begotten through the gospel,' and 'born again by the word of God,' are in no measure inconsistent with the doctrine of immediate, divine influence on the heart. God wrought *miracles* 'by the rod of Moses,' and 'by the hand of Paul;' but the instrumentality employed, surely did not supersede his own supernatural agency.

"But it has been said, 'The power of God which creates and governs matter, is a very different thing from that which is applied to mind. One is physical, the other can operate only through moral suasion.' It is very true, that the laws of matter are different from those of mind; but it does not follow that the power of God by which different effects are produced, must be of different kinds, according to the nature of those effects. 'Are we to conceive that the power proper to create inanimate matter could never create a thinking mind?—that angels and the souls of men were persuaded into being, by arguments and motives;

and that the material world was forced out of nothing, by the power of attraction?'*

"Great perplexity has arisen in recent discussions as to divine influence, from a very indefinite use of the term *physical;* and from the assumption that a direct agency of God upon the heart in regeneration, must be a *physical* operation. The power of one *man* to influence the mind of another man, is solely of the *mediate* kind, through motives. But it is neither becoming nor logical to infer, as some have done, that the power of *God* is restricted in the same manner. His access to the heart may be *immediate*, and in regeneration must be so. The change in this case is *moral;* it is wrought in a *moral* agent; the effects produced are *moral* effects. But the power producing the change, or the work itself, is not *moral*,—it is not *physical*, but *supernatural.*

"I know that there are good and respectable men, who have adopted the theory of moral suasion, and still do not mean to deny special grace. This latter doctrine they find sanctioned by the whole current of the Bible and of Christian experience. Hence they attempt to make out a complex theory; and seem to maintain that besides the moral power of motives, (such as the orator brings to bear on his hearers,) there is superadded, in the regeneration of a sinner, a divine influence on his heart, which still is not a *direct* influence. What is it then? Not a *mediate* influence, through the power of truth and motives. Not an *immediate* influence on the heart. What *is* this influence? Not a few, I apprehend, who have begun to slide downward from the faith of our Calvinistic churches, but who have been accustomed to use the current language of orthodoxy, as to divine influence, and verily suppose that they mean what the language imports;—if they would look

* Smalley.

carefully at the ground on which they stand, must be convinced that their favorite theory of moral suasion, and the doctrine of *special supernatural* influence in regeneration, *cannot both be true.* I have spoken thus freely, because I regard all speculations, which tend to exalt human instrumentality, and diminish a humble reliance on God, as fundamentally erroneous, and fatal to the spirit of genuine revivals.

"Another topic, which I would class under the general head of incorrect views concerning divine influence, is the theory which amounts to *regeneration by self-love.*

"Paul says, 'the carnal mind is enmity against God.' He did not mean against an imaginary and false character of God, such as *ought* to be hated; but against his *true* character. How is this enmity to be removed? Paul says, by such a change in the 'carnal mind,' that it shall love holiness, and become 'reconciled to God,' as he is; in other words, by bringing *up* the human heart to the standard of the Bible. Another mode of removing this enmity, is, to bring *down* the character of God by such a modification of his attributes, that the 'enmity' of the carnal mind towards it shall cease, without any radical change (in this mind); that is, with no change but such as will spontaneously occur in the sinner, from a change in his views as to the relations and feelings of God towards *himself.* It was by appealing to the principle of self-love, and a correspondent modification of the gospel, that the Romish missionaries in Eastern Asia, seemed likely to convert the whole heathen world. But after a fair experiment, it turned out that the converts were no better men than before; because 'it was one thing to Christianize heathen, and quite another thing to humanize and heathenize Christianity.'

"Paley resolved virtue into—'doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, *for the sake of everlasting*

happiness.' Bolingbroke, and the school of infidels to which he belonged, maintained that the 'chief principle of action in every man *must* be regard to his own interest.' The same sentiment has been, at different periods, maintained by theologians, professedly of the Arminian, as well as of the antinomian school. But it has been a subject of no small surprise to many, that the following statement should be made by a professed Calvinist, at this day:—'This self-love or desire of happiness, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice, which fix supremely on any object.' Again, 'the being, constituted with a capacity for happiness, desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges, or estimates their relative value, so he chooses, or prefers the one or the other, as his chief good.' Again, the feelings of the sinner under the influence of self-love, are represented during a process adapted to excite intense interest, till at last—'he is *willing* to fix, and does in fact fix the eye of contemplation upon the object of holy affection, and does, with such glimpses of its glories as he may obtain, feel their attractions, and summon his heart to that love of God his Saviour, which is the only condition of his mercy.'

"This language certainly is not so precise as one could wish; but it seems unavoidable to understand it as meaning; 'That regard to his *own happiness* is the primary and proper spring of action, in every man; that his moral character is determined solely by the object of his choice, or his estimate of his own interest, as correct or incorrect; that if he chooses the world as his chief good, from self-love, he is an unholy man; but if he chooses God, from self-love, he is a regenerate man.' And by that voluntary

act, in which he *first* prefers God to the world from regard to his own interest, he *becomes* regenerate.

"Now I have always supposed that where a man chooses one thing for the *sake of another*, as when he 'eats or drinks for the glory of God,' the latter is the *chief*, and the other a *subordinate* object of regard. In some cases the subordinate is not chosen at all for its own sake, as where a bitter drug or the amputation of a limb, is chosen to save life. At the most, therefore, if he who loves God, does so with an ultimate regard to his own happiness; and if he 'who chooses the happiness of others, does so for the happiness he expects in seeing others happy,' (as the above mentioned writer believes,) he makes God and his neighbor the *secondary*, and himself the *primary* and *chief* object of his regard.

"What then is the *standard* of duty? We have been accustomed to answer, *the divine law.* What does this require? 'Thou shalt love' (not THYSELF, but) 'the LORD THY GOD—with all thy heart.' Say that I exercise love to God, not because he requires it, not because he deserves it, but from the same motive as that with which I have loved wealth or worldly honor, namely, a desire of my own happiness; will God allow it, will common sense allow it to be a fulfilment of this great command? Plainly, this would be to fix my *supreme* love not on God but on myself.

"But is it the *object*, or is it the *motive* of a voluntary affection, that determines its character? Its *motive* certainly. This is coincident with its *supreme object*, but not with its *subordinate.* I might choose to be burnt at the stake; but who could say whether this subordinate choice is holy or sinful, without knowing the ulterior *motive;*—whether it is to get honor to myself, or to do honor to Christ? So if I choose God, the state of my heart is determined by the governing *motive;* is it because I love

his holy character? Then my choice is holy. Is it because he can make *me* happy? The ultimate regard of my heart (my *motive*) is not to God but myself.

"But is it wrong for me to regard my own interest? No—I am commanded to do it, by Him who made me the special guardian of my own life and happiness; and required of me duties to my own soul, and my immediate connections, which no one else can perform. But my self-love must be regulated by a proper regard to God, and the interests of the universe; and of course must not be the 'primary cause' of my moral preferences; it must not exalt myself above the creation around me, and the Creator too.

"Any man *may* use language so as not to express his meaning. But deliberately to admit that self-love must be the primary ground of moral affection, is to supersede all intelligent discussion about *regeneration*, or any of the kindred doctrines of grace. This one principle sweeps the whole away. There remains no radical distinction of character between the saint and the sinner. The most depraved individual on earth, or even among apostate spirits, doubtless is the centre of his own affections. And though he may have perverted views of what *is* his real interest, he means notwithstanding to act, and does act from a 'primary' regard to himself. And if this is the highest principle of action to a holy being, then an angel and a devil stand on the same ground, as to moral character;—in other words, there is no distinction between holiness or sin.

"Besides, this theory would split the moral system into as many jarring parts, with as many centres of 'primary' affection, as it contains individuals. It would set every moral agent at variance with every other moral agent, and with God himself. Whereas, the simple precept, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart,'—sets up

another standard in every bosom. It establishes a common centre of moral affection to the universe of moral agents; and binds the hearts of all to each other, and to the throne of Jehovah.

"I intended to analyze the 'self-love theory,' in its *practical* bearings on revivals, and its tendency to subvert all correct views as to special divine influence. I intended to show how easy it is for a man, who has been thoroughly alarmed with fears of hell, to become persuaded that God is his friend and will make him happy; and thus to feel that he loves God, when no spiritual change whatever has taken place in his heart. I intended to show how easy it is for such a man to mistake his 'love of happiness' and his choice of heaven, for conversion, while he has no 'love of holiness.' But I must forbear to extend these remarks."

In connection with the foregoing expression of Dr. Porter's religious opinions, we ought perhaps to cite his remarks from the same communication, respecting "a few things in our *theological* and *pulpit phraseology*," the tendency of which he feared was "to *obscure*, if not to *subvert*, *the scriptural doctrine of special divine influence*."

"Probably there is some significance in the fact, that many preachers of the younger class, often mention in their sermons *repentance*, *conversion*, &c., while they rarely if ever use the word *regeneration*. They consider these words, however, as synonymous, though the authority of biblical and theological usage decides otherwise. It is agreed on all hands, that the sinner is under immediate obligation to love God and repent; and that the only obstacle to his doing this, is his supreme love of sin. Now when this obstacle is removed, and the love of God begins in his heart, by *what agency* does it *begin?* Is it his own

agency or that of God, in which the change *originates?* The Bible ascribes it to God, and the change it calls *regeneration;* distinguishing by this term that beginning of holy affection in the heart by divine influence, from the continuance and development of holy affection under the same influence, which is called *conversion*, sanctification, &c. Hence we say, as the Bible does, concerning a man—he repented; but the Bible never teaches us to say, and we never presume to say, '*he regenerated himself.*' The words are no more exactly synonymous in Christian experience, than in technical theology. To illustrate my meaning by an analogy which is certainly imperfect, (as analogies must be on this subject,) in the call, 'Lazarus come forth'—the voice, the re-animating influence was of God;—the rising, and coming forth, was the act of Lazarus. Substantially the same difference exists between regeneration and repentance. Regeneration, the work of God on the heart, is done but *once;* repentance is needed *daily.* God's breathing into Adam the breath of life, so that he became a living soul, was done but *once;* Adam's breathing and living was a continuous exercise of his vital functions. Man is *created* but *once*, *born* but *once*, but lives and walks daily. The Christian is 'created anew' and 'born again,' but once, but repents every day of his life.

"The practical bearing of these remarks is this; some preachers speak of the sinner's 'conversion,' 'making himself a new heart,' &c. (for *regeneration*, as I said, is a term they avoid,) by a formal act of his own will, *resolving* to do it. Accordingly conversion is put on a footing with any common transaction in which a man changes his mind. And the representations of a change of heart, as being a great, and serious, and difficult thing, are treated with an air of flippant severity, sometimes approaching to profaneness. But this loose, indefinite mode of describing

conversion, be the preacher's motive ever so good, is certainly liable to great and dangerous misapprehension. Regeneration, in its grave and scriptural import, may be synonymous with conversion, but not with conversion as thus described. It is holiness and heaven begun in the soul by the Spirit of God. No *regenerate* man will be lost. But a man may be *converted* from Mohammedanism to Christianity, and be lost. He may be converted from Unitarianism to Calvinism, and be lost;—converted from levity to thoughtfulness, and from thoughtfulness to deep anxiety—and yet be lost. Nay, he may be converted from perfect indifference, or violent opposition to the gospel, into a joyful believer that he is an heir of salvation, and yet be lost.

"Now when I hear a sinner told from the pulpit, that 'conversion is a mere volition—a mere making up of his mind to embrace religion;—that the change of his heart is wholly an affair of his own will,' &c., I am not sure that the sentiment *intended* to be taught is wrong; but I am quite sure that the practical *tendency* of such language is to mislead this sinner as to his dependence on the Holy Spirit, and to cherish in him a presumptuous reliance on himself. Especially is it so, when, to give prominence to his own voluntary agency in his conversion, the change of heart is represented as a thing perfectly easy to himself, but entirely beyond the reach of omnipotence, except as effected by the spontaneous movement of his own will; God being unable to control his moral exercises, consistently with his freedom as a moral agent. Edwards, speaking of views similar to these, says, 'Thus our own holiness is from ourselves, as its determining cause, and its original and highest source.—Man is not dependent on God, but God is rather dependent on man in this affair; for he only operates consequentially in acts, in which he depends on what he sees we determine and do first.—

What can more effectually encourage the sinner in present delays and neglects, and embolden him to go on in sin, in a presumption of having his own salvation at all times at his command.'

"When it is said, 'It is as *easy* for a sinner to repent, as to remain impenitent,' the meaning may be right, but the language is not proper for the pulpit. There is no difficulty for a man to choose that to which his whole heart is inclined; but is it as *easy* for him, to *counteract* all the moral habits, affections and inclinations of his heart, as to *comply* with these? The doctrine of free agency is to be maintained by appeals to consciousness, experience, and common sense;—not to absurdity. Gabriel is a free agent; but who would think it proper to illustrate his free agency, by affirming that, 'it is as *easy* for him to blaspheme God, as to praise him?'

"As to the expression which represents conversion as consisting in 'the sinner's *making up his mind* to serve God;'—though the preacher's meaning may be correct, (as it certainly may be,)—the effect is that of a colloquial caricature of a sacred, scriptural truth. I mean that such is the effect, when this and other forms of expression are so employed, as virtually to leave out of view the Holy Spirit, and reduce the sinner's moral renovation to the familiar level of an ordinary transaction. During those revivals which I have described, a certain minister, in a sermon on the *new birth*, summed up his statement of the doctrine thus: 'All I know concerning regeneration is, for one to draw up *strong resolutions* to keep the commandments of God.' This man was an avowed disbeliever in special, divine influence. At that day no one anticipated, that in thirty years, substantially the same language would be employed by 'revival preachers,' to describe a change of heart.

"The ample scope given to my remarks, in the forego-

ing letters, has arisen from a deep conviction that the *doctrines of grace*, embraced by our Pilgrim fathers, and regarded as fundamental, in the churches which they established, must owe their preservation and perpetuity amongst us, in no small degree, to the influence of Christian ministers. Just so far as these doctrines are modified, from a love of philosophical theories, or from conformity to a vitiated taste, the sanctifying influences of the Spirit will forsake our churches, and our ministrations will cease to be the power of God unto salvation to perishing souls. All who wish to see an uncorrupted Christianity handed down to coming generations, should guard against open attacks on its vital truths, and against equivocal forms of expression by which the simplicity and power of these truths may be obscured, and gradually subverted."

In the conclusion of the letter from which the preceding extracts are taken, Dr. Porter remarks:—

"I must however add one caution in closing these Letters. While it has been my object to call your attention to several things which I think doubtful, and to others which I think decidedly wrong, in modes of preaching and conducting revivals;—I would by all means advise you to avoid that hesitating and paralyzing apprehension, which leads a minister to be so much afraid of *being wrong*, as to *do nothing*. Under God, the ministers of the nineteenth century have a mighty work to accomplish. Our own vast country is to be brought under the influence of the gospel. The wide world is to be evangelized. The day of slumber is past. The sacramental host of God's elect are marshaled in arms, and wait for ministers to lead them on to victory. Gird on your armor then, soldiers of the cross! The Captain of salvation heads the van, having on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS! He has gone forth in the triumphs

of his grace, conquering and to conquer. Stubborn hearts, in numbers unexampled, bow before the all-subduing influences of his Spirit. From the east and west, from the north and south, glad voices are heard to mingle in songs of salvation. "Awake O Zion, put on thy strength!"—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!" The great battle of God Almighty will succeed these wonderful effusions of his Spirit. Wo to those inhabitants of the earth, who shall withstand all the overtures of the Redeemer's mercy, and be found at last, among the incorrigible despisers of his grace!—whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming!

"Affectionately, yours, &c.

"E. Porter."

CHAPTER XIV.

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER—*continued.*

Characteristics as a Teacher in a theological seminary—Views of adequate training for the Christian ministry—Of the labors and responsibility of his department—Disadvantages under which he prosecuted study—Habits of exercise—Intercourse with his pupils—Mode of giving instruction—Estimate of a good delivery—Theory respecting moral tones and inflections—Letter from one of his pupils.

To the portraiture of Dr. Porter's professional character, belong also his characteristics as a teacher and presiding officer of a theological seminary. Among these, a deep feeling of responsibility and entire devotedness to his work, were prominent.

Adequate training for the Christian ministry, embraced in his view, much more than correct doctrinal sentiments, or ability to impart instruction to others;—it embraced the formation of a character, which should itself most eloquently teach the divine requirements. "The best commentary," he remarks, "on the religion taught by a minister, is, that first of all it makes himself a *good man.* His hearers do demand, and ought to demand that he shall *live* what he preaches. 'Who would listen to a Diotrephes condemning ambition; or to a Pharisee condemning hypocrisy?' Words are cheap: splendid professions are

empty things. Let the man possess the love of God in his own soul. This will give sanctity and weight to his life, his language, his very looks." The station of a teacher in any department of theological education, Dr. Porter considered a place of most solemn responsibility, as exerting a direct and extensive influence, favorable or unfavorable in the formation of ministerial character. Of the peculiar labors and responsibility of the department assigned to him, we may learn something of his views from a communication to the trustees, in which he says :—

"All the attainments that are made in other departments, are to be *exhibited* in this. The public know nothing of our students as to biblical or theological learning, except what appears in their capacity to write or speak. This department is therefore, in an important sense made responsible for the character and influence of the seminary. It is besides attended with more intrinsic difficulties than any other branch of instruction. So the Creator has been pleased to arrange his gifts, that there are five men capable of being distinguished in intellectual studies, to one that can become conspicuous in oratory. The systems of academical education in modern ages, have been generally unfriendly to high attainments in this art, being adapted to cultivate the understanding; but to repress rather than cherish the emotions of the youthful bosom. In some of our colleges the business of taste and of elocution stands on a very respectable footing; in others, it is greatly neglected; and in none of them does it receive a tenth part of that attention which made the orators of ancient days. Considering the state of our minor academies, and the limited resources which most of our colleges possess, I am not disposed to find fault that no more is accomplished on this subject. I only state the fact as it is, and the consequence unavoidably resulting

from it, that not a few of our students come to us with habits both of writing and speaking that are positively bad.

"Here too, other important branches of study engross the first year and the second; so that in these, only a subordinate attention can be paid to sacred rhetoric. In the third year, it becomes the primary business; but the students' minds are then in a far less favorable state for successful efforts, than in the commencement of their course. The novelty of the place and of the system are worn away; health and spirits are in many cases exhausted at the close of ten years' application. In some, zeal for preaching, and in all, desire to make various arrangements preparatory to entering on their profession for life, renders the summer term nearly useless to the senior class, for study.

"There is another consideration which has an important bearing on this department; namely, that while it requires a system of precepts, it is to be taught as an art rather than as a science. After all the use that can be made of text books, and rules, and authorities, the advancement of the student both in writing and delivery, depends essentially on *practice*. It is this that constitutes the endless labor in this branch of instruction. Classical exercises must be maintained as in the other departments, but to these must be superadded a system of individual instruction, such as is not required in any other business of the seminary. In regard to the more extended of these exercises, such as the criticism of sermons, the attention to *each pupil* costs more labor than is ordinarily required of any professor in meeting a class. The amount of labor in instructing a large class, thus collectively and separately, is not easily understood by one who has not made the experiment."

To the preceding statements it may be added that the department of labor assigned to Dr. Porter was in some respects *new*, and required that his instructions should traverse a field, to a considerable extent untrodden by any predecessor. Not, indeed, because the subject of sacred eloquence has received no attention. Men have cultivated this branch of theological learning for centuries; books have been published in considerable numbers, many of them, however, deficient either in the character or quantity of their contents:—its importance too, by a few, has been duly appreciated; while by the majority even of professed scholars, labor in this department has been undervalued, and by many has been accounted superfluous.* In entering on an appropriate course of study, the student of sacred eloquence can refer to few repositories of instruction like those accessible to the student of theology or biblical interpretation. Dr. Porter enjoyed this advantage, however, that the studies he was required to pursue, were suited to his taste and habits. For them he had long cherished ardent love. With many

* A brief extract from the statutes of the seminary respecting the course of instruction in the rhetorical department, may interest many readers. They require that in the department of sacred rhetoric, a competent number of lectures shall be delivered, "on the importance of oratory; on the invention and disposition of topics; on the several parts of a regular discourse; on elegance, composition and dignity of style; on pronunciation; on the proper management of the voice, and correct gesture; on the immense importance of a natural manner; on the rules to be observed in composing a sermon, and on the adaptation of the principles and precepts of ancient rhetoric to this modern species of oration; on the qualities in the speaker, in his style, and in his delivery, necessary to a finished pulpit orator; on the methods of strengthening the memory, and of improving in sacred eloquence; on the character and style of the most ancient divines, and the best models of imitation, their respective beauties and excellencies in thought and expression; and above all, on the transcendent simplicity, beauty, and sublimity of the *sacred writings*."

of his duties, moreover, as professor of sacred rhetoric, his experience in giving instruction to theological students while a pastor, had already rendered him familiar. It required no effort on his part to summon his energies and bend them to his work. To it they were devoted from choice as well as by direction of Providence. He felt that in calling him to this station, his divine Master had opened before him a field, as well of rich enjoyment, as of onerous labor and extensive usefulness.

The duties to which Dr. Porter was called as an instructor, the reader may infer from the preceding extract from his communication to the trustees, were exceedingly miscellaneous, and therefore unfavorable to severe application to study. The brief intervals, moreover, which he was enabled to snatch for study, from the endless round of ever varying labors, were rendered comparatively unproductive by bodily suffering. Few men, we may believe, in discharging professional duty and in prosecuting professional study, have permanently encountered more disheartening obstacles than those originating in his continued and often extreme infirmity. To these obstacles any thing short of irrepressible love for study, and invincible determination to serve God to the utmost of his ability, would have yielded. "His enthusiasm for study," says one of his colleagues, "was exceedingly great. Never have I seen a desire burn more intensely. And when he saw that Providence had decided by his state of health, some years ago, that he must abandon all hopes of extensive reading and study, the struggle was more than many deaths. I witnessed the painful contest which agitated him to the very bottom of his soul. But piety gained the victory. Submission to the will of God was the result; and peaceful acquiescence ever continued." Often he was reduced to the alternative

of neglecting official duties entirely, or of discharging them, especially the more private duties, while exercised with pain amounting almost to agony. The writer has been informed by Mrs. Porter, who, on account of her husband's "often infirmities," was much occupied in attentions to him, that she has frequently known him, when confined by illness to his bed, pursue professional reading; and in some instances even when her assistance was indispensable in holding the books he wished to peruse. At other times, he would in similar circumstances employ himself in writing. The fact that under such discouragements he made acquisitions so honorable to himself, and so useful to others, is evidence that in early life his intellectual powers had been subjected to judicious discipline. When unable to meet his class at the lecture room, he commonly met them in his study. During his frequent absences, he usually kept up his course of instruction, by addressing letters to his class on the topics on which he would have lectured.

Dr. Porter's state of health rendered extreme caution requisite in reference to bodily exercise. To this, as indispensable to his usefulness, a portion of his time was regularly and scrupulously devoted. Of walking he was fond, and practiced it much when his strength would allow; but his favorite exercise was riding on the saddle. To this however, his strength for some years before his death was unequal, and he was obliged to employ a carriage as a substitute. Of the cultivation of his grounds, especially of his garden, which always exhibited unequivocal tokens of industry and correct taste, he was equally fond. To the use of mechanical tools he was also strongly attached, and in this way often employed much of the time devoted to exercise, whenever the state of the weather forbade his taking it abroad. The furniture of his study was mostly of his own construction;

indeed there was hardly a room in his dwelling which did not contain some product of his ingenuity, exhibiting a high degree of mechanical skill. When in foul weather he needed more vigorous exercise than was afforded by the ordinary use of mechanical tools, he was accustomed to resort to the saw and the axe. So essential was perfect regularity in taking his exercise, that he was compelled, when otherwise it would have been interrupted by the severe cold, to provide for himself facilities for sawing and splitting wood in a warm apartment.

Dr. Porter's mode of intercourse with his pupils, was of the kind best suited to secure their confidence and affection. He manifestly cherished a deep interest in whatever concerned their usefulness or happiness. With paternal solicitude he was ever ready to reprove the wayward; to encourage and aid those struggling with poverty; to cheer the desponding; to lend sympathy and counsel to the subjects of bodily infirmity In discharging these various offices of Christian friendship, he conferred obligations on many of his pupils, which in numerous instances were remembered and acknowledged with the liveliest gratitude. Among those who enjoyed his special friendship while at Andover, and his frequent and judicious counsels after entering their field of labor, were many missionaries to the heathen, of whom a part "remain till this present, but some are fallen asleep." In the lecture room, his manner was dignified and kind. None of his pupils it is believed, were ever disposed to complain that their opinions were not treated by their teacher with candor and respect. Conscienciously refraining from censorious remarks himself, he forbade them in those he instructed. Both by precept and example, he encouraged in them, whether remarking on each others sentiments, or

style, or utterance, the exercise of the meekness and benevolence of the gospel.

In giving his instructions, particularly those which were extemporaneous, he was not fluent. At times, there was an unpleasant hesitancy in his delivery, the result of habit, which probably originated in unusual cautiousness. This was hardly noticed, however, by one who was accustomed daily to listen to him; or if noticed, was involuntarily overlooked in the assemblage of excellencies which characterized him as a teacher. His instructions were uniformly lucid and methodical, evincing a familiar acquaintance with the topics he was called to discuss, derived from judicious reading and mature reflection. In stating facts he was scrupulously accurate; in canvassing the opinions of others, was candid and just; in advancing his positions, was deliberate and wary, never allowing himself to advocate theories of suspicious tendency, or to advance sentiments of whose correctness he entertained doubts. Another feature of his instructions was appositeness. His language was chaste, appropriate, often elegant, and at times, peculiarly forcible. Among his qualifications as a teacher of sacred rhetoric, one which contributed as much perhaps as any other to his usefulness, was an ability to point out with singular precision and distinctness a fault in the structure or diction of a composition; in the enunciation, or gesticulation of a speaker, united with corresponding skill in prescribing correctives.

Fully convinced that much of a preacher's usefulness must depend on his qualities as a speaker, Dr. Porter felt that no efforts which would awaken interest on this subject could be superfluous. As conducive to this end he devoted much time to an exercise in elocution, attended by small parties of the students, which he denominated "reading clubs." In this exercise he was able to specify faults and

apply correctives, with much more ease and effect than it was possible to secure in more public performances. With the same end in view, he cordially lent his influence and co-operation in the organization of a Rhetorical Society in the seminary, whose design was directly subsidiary to his labors. In the incipient measures of this society, his counsel exerted a controlling influence; and to further its objects, particularly to aid in establishing a library, he contributed liberally to its funds. As an expression of gratitude for his judicious counsels and munificence, the society voted soon after its organization to style itself the 'Porter Rhetorical Society.' Its influence in improving the style and elocution of its members, and their power of extemporaneous speaking, fully equalled his anticipations.

Dr. Porter labored assiduously to impress on his pupils correct precepts respecting *vocal tones and inflections.* To the adoption of a correct theory on this subject, he attached much more importance than has been usual even among public speakers. Though aware that the attainment of a good delivery must depend very much on *practice*, he believed no less fully that in ordinary cases it must depend equally on an adequate knowledge of principles—a knowledge, which may be derived from books, or from the living teacher, or from a careful observation of vocal exercises. In arranging his system of precepts on this subject, he deserves, to a considerable extent, the credit of originality: for though he eagerly availed himself of the suggestions of others, the principles he inculcated were chiefly the result of his own reflections. The writer is happy in being able to furnish confirmation of this fact, in the following letter from a clergyman, now a Professor in a Theological Seminary, who was one of Dr. Porter's pupils at the time he was preparing his analysis of vocal inflections for publication, and to whom

he communicated the process by which he was led to adopt the principles embraced in his system.

"————, *April* 14, 1836.

"My dear Brother,

"My first recollections of Dr. Porter carry me back to Andover, to the time when I was a member of the junior class in the seminary, and present him before me as he stood in the pulpit in the ministrations of the Sabbath. This was nearly the only spot in which I then saw him, and here we almost always heard him with admiration. There was a remarkable chastity, purity and finish in his style, which gave a charm to his discourses, while his manner and delivery, though they marked not the orator in the common acceptation of the word, showed the man of feeling, of culture, and judgment. His voice was only of common strength, having no natural qualities to render it peculiarly suited to the purposes of the public speaker. Yet his enunciation was so distinct, and so perfectly accurate; his emphasis was so appropriate in its quality, and so justly laid; his gesture so simple, so natural, so graceful, and so exactly timed; and his eye was so piercing in its gaze, that in those days he was a speaker of no ordinary merit, one who could but delight and enchain the cultivated mind. I have often thought of Austin's description of correct speaking, and have as often regarded it as a true representation of Dr. Porter's elocution in his more happy efforts. 'In just articulation,' says he, 'the words are to be delivered out from the lips as beautiful coins newly issued from the mint, deeply and accurately impressed, perfectly finished, neatly struck by the proper organs, distinct, in due succession, and of due weight.'*

* Austin's Chironomia.

"Dr. Porter never made a false gesture nor an unnecessary one. His hand was put forth 'suiting the action to the word,' just when it would produce the appropriate effect, and with an ease and grace which I have witnessed in the same degree in scarcely any other man. Such was his speaking at this period of his life. And if at other times it was less fortunate, this may be accounted for by the ill health which was his constant affliction, and by the many interruptions incident to his station which may have prevented his usual preparation. The force which he could impart to single words by the accuracy of his emphasis and inflections was the subject of remark by every student who heard him. And they will not soon forget the power and beauty with which he read the fine passages of Shakspeare, Milton, Cowper, the holy Scriptures, and the psalms and hymns used in sacred worship.

"Dr. Porter in his writings on the tones and inflections used in speaking, professed only to have carried out and rendered more perspicuous those principles which had been exhibited by Walker. Walker had published them to the world before Dr. Porter appeared as an author in the department of rhetoric. But Walker, if we may judge from his writings, was far from having clear ideas in relation to many points of his theory; and his canons for the management of the voice, besides being oftentimes perfectly artificial, are sometimes also so involved and obscure, that it is with the utmost difficulty any meaning can be discovered in them. Dr. Porter remarked, at the time he published his Analysis of Rhetorical Delivery, that he had discovered the principles developed in that book long before he saw the publications of Walker. Sometime after he commenced his ministry, as he said, he made the management of the voice a subject of most attentive study. He was accustomed to note its changes in conversation and in public speaking; and as he rode

from place to place in discharge of his ministerial duties, to make experiments with his voice, until he discovered the inflections and their use and application in speaking. The rising and falling slides, and the circumflex, and the use of the rising slide in tender emotion, had all been ascertained by him by actual experiment and observation. In this then he was really an inventor, and before he saw Walker's writings, had a more clear and thorough idea of the vocal inflections than Walker himself. I mention this to show that Dr. Porter in that particular branch of elocution, a branch in which he excelled all other men of my acquaintance, was not a mere imitator, but an original thinker, and that his system of inflections was the result of his own observations.

"I know that many have doubted whether any good effects result to the public speaker from an attention to the system of tones and inflections on the principles of Dr. Porter and Walker. Whately contends that this practice completely fails of its object, and even produces oftener than not, effects the very reverse of what is designed.* And it must be confessed that many who attempted to observe Dr. Porter's rules when we were his pupils, made a very awkward and laborious business of public speaking. But then, they were poor speakers at best from the bad habits of early life, habits from which it was exceedingly difficult to recover. A good and delicate ear seems requisite in one who would successfully speak on the principles of Dr. Porter, and care should be used that the inflections be not made the whole of public speaking, and that the whole matter be not overdone. They appear to me to be exceedingly useful in enabling a student to detect his own bad habits, and in pointing out

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* Richard Whately, D. D. Elements of Rhetoric. Cambridge, 1832. p. 260.

their remedy. They should be used in private practice and study. But when a speaker comes before the public, he is to forget himself and his manner, and aim only to communicate his thoughts and warm emotions to his hearers. The results of private study will appear in public delivery. But it will be exceedingly offensive if there is any appearance in the speaker of contrivance and artifice, and if he should seem to be preparing to give the falling slide here, the rising there, and the circumflex there; here to speak fast, and there slow; here soft and there loud; here to put forth a beautiful gesture, and there a violent one. The ambassador of God, sent to propose a reconciliation with him, and to point out to revolted men the way of return, must only be occupied with this when he stands up to address dying men.

"With much affection,

"Your friend and brother."

CHAPTER XV.

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER—*continued.*

Characteristics as a presiding officer of a theological seminary—Testimony of his colleague—First object to promote the growth of piety in his pupils—Views of its importance—Memoranda of pastoral conversations—His interests identified with those of the seminary—Anxiety that theological education should be thorough—Concern respecting the rights of Congregational churches—Illustrations of their corporate capacity.

As a presiding officer of the theological seminary, Dr. Porter was watchful over the interests committed to his supervision. In his view, it was a point which admitted not of discussion, that an energetic and faithful execution of the laws of any public institution, literary or religious, is indispensable to its permanent prosperity. Accordingly in enforcing the regulations of the seminary, he was systematic, vigilant, decided, and impartial. In vain did the delinquent expect undue favor from him on any ground. Yet so manifestly equitable and benevolent was his administration, that prejudice itself could rarely find pretence for the slightest censure. Dr. Porter used to say that he could, in most cases, predict the subsequent character and success of an individual, from his habits in respect to diligence and punctuality in the seminary. "In his office as President," says one of his colleagues,

"we can never expect any one to excel him. Nothing important was wanting. Every thing was done and well done, that needed to be done." To the same qualities which designated him for the executive department in the seminary, we are doubtless to attribute the frequency with which he was called to preside in the deliberations of public bodies.

Pastoral labor in a theological seminary, has a direct influence in forming the character of successive generations of ministers, and thus must contribute eminently in giving tone to the piety and efficiency of the church. In no circumstances therefore, can piety and wisdom be more imperiously demanded; in none can their exercise be followed by more important results. In his pastoral intercourse with the students, to which in common with his colleagues he was called, Dr. Porter was wont, first of all, to urge upon them the cultivation of personal piety—an object with a primary reference to which all his labors were performed. He sometimes remarked, "I would rather one of my friends should be an honest tinker, than a minister without piety." Alluding to this subject in a letter, he says,—"The junior class I understand is about sixty. You know enough of my heart to be assured, that this fact interests me deeply. The prosperity of our beloved seminary will give joy to my heart, while it rejoices in any thing. But still I rejoice with trembling. If the presence of God is not granted in abundant measures to the seminary, the augmentation of numbers will be a calamity to the church. Far be the day, when the ambition to be fine gentlemen and fine scholars shall supplant the spirit of piety in that blessed spot, whose chief glory has hitherto been a succession of men of kindred spirit with Brainerd, Buchanan and Martyn." We cannot resist the temptation to quote the expression of Dr. Porter's views on this subject, from

the conclusion of one of his Lectures, which though published elsewhere, probably will not be accessible to many into whose hands this volume may fall.

"In all the sacrifices incident to frail health and residence among strangers, my heart has been exhilarated in reviewing my relations to this seminary, not so much from those marks of prosperity which attract public notice—not so much from the elegance of its buildings, the amount of its funds, or the growing number of its students, as from the decided character of *piety*, which I trust has prevailed within its walls. It is when I think that many young ministers who are burning and shining lights in our own country; it is when I look to our missionary stations abroad, and think that many of those whom the American church has sent to assault the strong holds of paganism, were the sons of Andover; it is when I recollect that these men, and others of like spirit, once occupied these *rooms*, and kneeled in these *closets*, which are consecrated to the same sacred purposes through succeeding generations, that my heart cleaves with inviolable attachment to this hill of Zion. Just so far as each successive class shall continue to furnish men of this character; and shall give new proof, from year to year, that substantial learning, embellishment of taste, and fervor of holy zeal may be combined in the ministers of Christ; we have a guarantee that the Simeons and Annas of our churches will continue to pray for us. In different parts of this country, there are many ministers of solid sense and information, who have risen by the strength of their own character to distinguished usefulness and influence, and that with inferior early advantages. These ministers, and the body of intelligent Christians with whom they are connected, will give us the aid of their confidence and their prayers, no further than they see evidence, that literary acquisitions

are sanctified by a predominant character of *piety* in our students. God forbid that these churches, reared by the Hookers and Mathers of former days, should ever be compelled to choose between fervid ignorance and scholastic apathy in the pulpit. But rely on it, if they are not forsaken by the Holy Spirit, much as they are disposed to cherish theological seminaries, these churches, should we drive them to that alternative, will pass by cold scholars, and prefer men of moderate learning with ardent piety, to be their ministers. So it *will* be; and so it *ought* to be. And could the fathers of New England, and the departed founders of this seminary, speak from amid the full light which heaven reflects on the interests of the church below, they would doubtless say with one voice, *so let it be.*

"On this subject I feel myself to be speaking as one that must give account; speaking to a family of young ministers, in whom a higher stamp of personal religion ought to be expected, than in any other associated circle, of equal numbers, on the globe. To your instructors it has been given in special charge, as their first duty, to make the cultivation of your *piety* an object of unremitted care. Important stations in the church, perhaps my own office, or that of my respected colleagues, may hereafter devolve on some of you; and it should be our most earnest endeavor to cherish in you those principles, without which, even in the humblest sphere, we cannot hope to see you useful or happy. You see then, on what my best anticipations as to the spirit of sacred eloquence here are suspended. Could I determine how far the spirit of genuine devotion prevails in your hearts; could I see how far personal ambition is supplanted by the love of Christ and of one another; could I inspect each closet, and take the temperature of each man's piety from day to day,—then I should be satisfied what progress to look for in *that eloquence,* which God will approve and employ for the ad-

vancement of his own cause. O could our fathers, Norris, Abbot, and Spring, attend your rhetorical exercises, and among the catalogue of your names, could they fix on *one*, who aims to become an eloquent preacher, while he neglects to commune with his own heart and with his God, in secret, with what eyes think you would they look on such a son of their seminary! How, especially, could his motives bear the inspection of *that* eye, which as a flame of fire searches every heart!"*

From the following memoranda of Dr. Porter's pastoral conversations with the students, the reader may best learn his mode of ascertaining their spiritual wants and of communicating instruction.

"General Subjects of Conversation.

"1. Can you mention any points in regard to progress in piety, on which students would be most likely to be benefitted by conversation with me?

"2. What circumstances have you found favorable and what unfavorable to the cultivation of piety here? Have you observed any difference, in different seasons of the year?

"3. What books have you found most useful to promote the spirit of piety?

"4. What is the influence of the religious class meeting?

"5. The best times for secret devotion, and the best manner of conducting it, as to reading, &c.

"6. The influence of study on devotional feeling.

"7. The influence of devotional feeling on study.

"8. How far has your enjoyment in secret devotion depended on *regularity* in it?

"9. In going out from this place and returning, do you

* Lecture V. on Eloquence.

find the temperature of piety here higher or lower than elsewhere?

"March 29. Saturday evening.—Saw eight of the junior class; and found special interest in remarking to them on three points. 1. The importance of daily reading more or less of the best devotional books, especially the old Puritans. 2. The tendency among ministers to live on an old hope, taking it for granted that they are Christians, so as to neglect self-examination. 3. The danger of resting in an intellectual religion; in distinction from the simple piety of plain Christians, that fastens on Christ with a firmness of grasp that all the skepticism of the world cannot shake.

"10. Divine guidance.

"Examples—A minister is called to remove to another church; a theological student is doubting whether he shall devote his life to missions or to the pastoral work. He remembers the direction, 'Commit thy way to the Lord, and he shall direct thy steps.'

"How is this guidance to be sought?*

"Negatively 1. Not by casting *lots*. In the days of miracles, this appeal to the lot, made with solemn prayer, was proper; but there is no sanction for it in the Bible, as an ordinary thing, in our times. It is an appeal, either

"(a) to *chance*, which is atheism, or

"(b) to *God*, which is presumption—i. e. as commonly made concerning trifles, and with levity instead of religious reverence.—Commonly made as to some indifferent thing that must be decided, but no matter how.

"Objections to this are—(a) if it is regarded as a decision from God, why not resort to it with prayer? (b) Why not in great cases where duty is concerned? (c) Why not in all cases, ecclesiastical, judicial, prudential, &c. when

* A train of thought similar to this, may be found in one of John Newton's Letters.

we want a decision *certainly* right? (d) Why complain of ticket venders, and lotteries on a large scale?

"2. Not by opening at random to a text in the Bible. This is another sort of lottery—is using the Bible as an amulet, and is a sort of devout, Christian atheism.

"3. We are not to expect a new revelation, a voice, a dream.

"4. We are not to expect special impressions in prayer. A thing may be wrong, and yet we may earnestly desire it. We cannot tell whether our friend in a distant country is alive or dead, from our freedom in praying for him.

"This guidance is to be sought,

"Affirmatively,—In *humble prayer*. It is sanctifying, divine influence; freeing the mind from selfishness; rendering it candid, and open to fair, just views of duty, as learned from the Bible and providence.

"11. Things which tend to injure the temper of the theological student, as to spirituality, meekness, candor.

"1. Irritability and peevishness, contracted by severe study, bad health, indigestion.—In general, when a man is in this state, he should *know* it, and *talk but little.*

"2. Emulation;—the habit of setting up a man's self, and estimating things in relation to his own interest or influence;—aspiring to influence by party spirit, or management.

"3. A habit of suspecting the motives of others, and speaking censoriously of their character.

"4. Disputation, in distinction from cool discussion.

"(a) On important theological subjects.—Influence of maintaining the wrong side, why bad.

"(b) On common subjects that come up in the meetings of the students for business.—The expediency of multiplying such meetings, where collision and sharp debate are expected.—Fraternal feeling disturbed.

"5. Colloquial habits that cherish levity and frivolity.

"(a) Why liable to exist here.

"(b) Why to be guarded against.

"12. Love to the brethren.

"Our students must be instructed in the best way to examine their own hearts; and to instruct Christians in this thing. Dr. Payson's manner is to descend from *general* things to *specific*. e. g. 'I am a great sinner,' is a confession any Christian can make. But it is indefinite and unimpressive. To *feel*, I must be particular. How many sins did I commit in the first five years of life? reckoning every unholy thought, &c. Then, how many in the next five? remembering what each sin deserves.

"Or take my own relations, 1. To God as my Creator, preserver, &c. 2. To fellow Christians. 3. To natural relatives. 4. To the world. Ramify them with their obligations, and see how many duties I have neglected, and how many sins committed in respect to all these.

"Or take my own faculties: reason, memory, conscience, &c.—Of body too, eyes, ears, hands. How often has each been perverted?

"Or requisitions of the divine law, as to God, my neighbor, and myself. The requisitions of the gospel too.

"This kind of self-examination must not be hurried over. *Particulars* must be *fixed* in the eye, and *spread* out, till the soul is humbled, and brought to the cross. By such a process a church may come profitably to renew covenant, and to grow in grace by seasons of fasting and prayer."

Dr. Porter's interests became *identified* with those of the seminary. In a letter written some years before his death, he remarks:—"It is enough to say of Andover, that among earthly interests, that is the centre of my affections. I think of it with the same intense, though not with

the same melancholy remembrance, as the Israelites in Babylon thought of their temple and beloved city. There is no reason why I should be gloomy. Though I am at present in exile, my beloved city is not in ruins, but in great prosperity. My own interests too for time and eternity, are in so good hands, that I would not commit them to other keeping if I could." "Of our beloved seminary, my heart daily says, 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning,' &c." For the sake of the seminary, much more than for his own, he desired the enjoyment of health; and his infirmities occasioned him solicitude mainly because they interrupted his labors, and thus affected his usefulness. To Mrs. Porter he writes:—"You know, my dear wife, that my greatest solicitude respecting my frail health has arisen from the apprehension that it may be the occasion of injury to the interests of our beloved seminary. In this regard chiefly it has been the subject of doubt and prayer with me, how far the experiment should go as to my restoration; and what degree of infirmity it must be, to make the relinquishment of my office an obvious duty. I see no way to dispose of this question safely, but to cast the responsibility on judicious friends, attached to the seminary by the strongest ties, and at the same time regarding me with an affection far beyond my merits; and thus commit the whole subject to Providence. And yet I cannot but look toward that hill of Zion, with mingled emotions of love and anxiety; love to my office and the dear circle with whom I am associated; anxiety lest I and my friends should overrate the importance of my services to the institution. I am aware that besides the great responsibility of *any* office in that seminary, there are intrinsic difficulties peculiar to my department, difficulties which the best combination of qualities in an instructor are barely sufficient to encounter. But the degree of indulgence extended

to my defects, and of success attending my imperfect labors hitherto, require me to proceed with increased effort, if God is pleased to grant me strength. To Him I cheerfully commit the result."

As Dr. Porter advanced in years, he felt an increasing anxiety that the course of theological education should be *thorough*. On this subject he spoke with emphasis in the lecture room and in the pulpit.* His estimate of its importance, formed from a deliberate and oft repeated survey of ministerial relations and responsibilities, in which he was perhaps the more confirmed, by frequent expressions of gratitude from those who had once been members of the seminary, that they had been persuaded to complete the course of study prescribed by the statutes, may be inferred from the following paper on the subject, communicated for publication in the American Quarterly Register.

"The necessity that young men, who are preparing for the ministry, should pursue a thorough course of study, especially of theological study, is a subject on which I am willing most fully to express my views, according to your request; and I can have no objection that these views should be made public, if it is your wish to make them so, through the Quarterly Register of the American Education Society. I only regret that the various engagements by which my time is engrossed, render it impossible for me, at present, to give that attention to the subject, which my conviction of its importance would, in other circumstances, induce me to bestow upon it. I have no doubt, however, that your readers will be disposed to regard with candor, any suggestions that I may offer on this subject;

* For a further expression of Dr. Porter's views on this subject, the reader is referred to his Sermon on the Magnitude of the Preacher's Work.

and especially that these suggestions will be thus regarded by my younger brethren in the ministry.

"If I may be allowed to speak of my own personal experience, I would wish to make it admonitory to those who are coming after me. I entered on professional studies after a course of academical preparation, extended to nearly seven years, and pursued under as good advantages as the state of the country then allowed. This preparatory course was not interrupted by *school teaching*, a practice which most unhappily prevails of late, in some of our colleges, to such an extent as virtually to reduce a *four* years' education to less than *three*, especially if we include the exhaustion of vital power under which a student must go on in college, who has devoted all his vacations to a most arduous employment. The infelicity of my case was, that my theological preparation, though acquired under the direction of a distinguished divine and theological instructor,* and continued for a longer period than was customary at the time, was much *too short*. When I came to enter on my work in a large country parish, and to learn, as I soon did, how inadequate was my stock of acquired knowledge, I was driven to extremities. Besides the weekly writing of sermons, and the endless routine of pastoral engagements, I must somehow find time for that professional and general reading, which I now saw to be indispensable, and lamented that I had not accomplished to a greater extent, before entering on my ministry. The consequence was, (and I hope others may profit by the mistake,) I resorted to a course of *night studies*, which in a few years made shipwreck of my constitution.

"Since the period to which I have now referred, the course of events has been such as to create a strong de-

* The late Rev. Dr. Smalley.

mand, and every year increases this demand, for higher and higher qualifications in the ministry. The inquisitive, and enterprising, and intelligent character of the age; the resources of learning perverted by the advocates of error; above all, the wide field of moral influence opening in our western States, and the call for men to go to the heathen, who may be safely trusted in translating the Bible, and laying Christian foundations for centuries to come;—all these, and many other considerations have opened on the church a new era, calling for augmented resources, in the moral and intellectual furniture of ministers. In accordance with these remarks, public sentiment has most distinctly declared itself, in the establishment of theological seminaries, and in the patronage they have received, from the most judicious men in the land. Before these measures were adopted, there had long been a gradual falling off from the ground occupied by the early Fathers of our churches, many of whom were distinguished scholars, especially in the literature of the sacred writings.

"I should think myself especially unfortunate in the following remarks, if they should make the impression on the mind of any good man, that I would exalt intellectual furniture in ministers, at the expense of personal piety. Perhaps I cannot better guard against such an impression, and show the habitual feelings of my own mind on this subject, than by subjoining in a note a few sentences from a manuscript sermon, which I delivered in the chapel of the theological seminary, in this place, some months ago.*

* "We are under special obligations to cultivate the spirit of piety in our own hearts. When I remember the pioneers of the cross, trained up here for their sacred and self-denying work of gathering churches in our new settlements; and when I think of the missionary stations among the heathen, occupied by the sons of this seminary, I am cheered by the hope that God will bless it

I hope this extract will show that it is not my habit to undervalue piety in the ministry.

"In urging the necessity of an extended course of theological study, one other suggestion seems proper, to guard against misapprehension of my meaning. Nothing could be farther from my design, than to cast any reproach on those who, like myself, entered the ministry, before the facilities which now exist for such a course of study, were provided. It is equally remote from my purpose to say, that every candidate for the ministry, without regard to his

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with his own gracious presence, and make it still the instrument of promoting his own cause. The church expects, and has a right to expect, that we shall raise up devoted and holy men for her service. I would not say, by any means, that all our students should actually engage in missions; but they should possess the *spirit* of missions, or they cannot be useful, at this day, in any department of the ministry.

"Let profound learning be cultivated here. Let interpreters of the Bible, and theologians, and preachers, who are *able* men, go from these halls annually. Christian learning is the heavy artillery of the ministry, against the armies of the aliens. This too the church expects of us, and has a right to expect. But the church will not be satisfied with this. She demands that from year to year, not only learned and eloquent men, but men glowing with zeal for God, and the salvation of sinners, should go from this place. On this condition, the pious Simeons and Annas of the land, 'praying to God alway, and waiting for the consolation of Israel,' will pray *for us;*—a thousand closets will send up their supplications, in a cloud of incense, that God will bless this school of sacred learning. And when such men as Hall and Fisk die, the church will know where to look for others to fill their places. But oh,—should the day come, when such a call of heaven should reach us, 'Who will go to that post of self-denial?'—and there be none to answer, 'Here am I;'—should the day come, when *learning* shall be the all absorbing business here, and *personal religion* be understood to be a subordinate concern, (and it will be so understood, if it *is* so,) then will the church mourn; her confidence in this seminary will be deservedly and irretrievably lost; and the finger of heaven will write on these walls, '*The glory is departed.*'"

age, and other circumstances, should pursue a three years' course of study in theology. But what I mean to say is, and the time in my opinion has come to say this very distinctly, that henceforward, such a course of study is short enough, as a general rule. If any one is providentially prevented from pursuing it, that should be submitted to as his calamity. I am the more confident in my opinions on this subject from the fact, that during twenty-two years' experience as an instructor of theological students, sixteen of which have been passed in my present relations, I have heard not a few young men lament their own haste in entering the ministry, but not an individual have I known to intimate that he had spent too much time in preparatory studies.

"But it is time to drop this prefatory matter, and come to the main point, why a thorough intellectual preparation for the sacred office is necessary.

"When Paul says to Timothy that a bishop should not be a *novice*, there is a figurative allusion in the original word, that is very significant. Literally the expression is, 'not an infant.' It denotes that want of knowledge or skill, which we see in a new born child, that would certainly fail of success, if set to accomplish any work requiring the strength and intelligence of a man. There is a secondary sense too, that is scarcely less pertinent. It refers to a tree or plant recently set in the earth, which has not had time to become *rooted*, and is easily disturbed by the wind or any external violence. The meaning is, that a Christian minister ought not only to be mature in religious experience, but to have a sound, well furnished understanding. Both these requisites he needs, lest being inflated with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. That stability of character which can resist temptation, and qualify a man to be a guide in the church, must come from fixed religious opinions, grounded on a thorough acquaint-

ance with divine truth. The apostle, that he might be certainly understood on this subject, often exhorts Timothy to diligence in reading, and meditation, and study of the scriptures, the great store-house of divine knowledge; through which the minister might become furnished for his work.

"In remarking on this subject then, I would advance no theories that are extravagant, none that are new—none indeed that are not sanctioned by apostolic authority. Let any man (if in this age of light there is any man) who advocates the cause of clerical ignorance, read the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and then answer this plain question: did a teacher of religion, who had the gift of inspiration to understand the scriptures, and the gift of tongues to preach; a teacher too, born amid the scenery and customs described in the Bible, and familiar with the language in which important parts of it were written,—did he need the aid of study and reading to qualify him for his work? and can a man, who has not one of all these advantages, be qualified for the same work, *without* study? How is he to know what is in the Bible, till he has *studied* the Bible? and how can he *study* the Bible, so as to have, concerning what is peculiar in its language, local allusions, and usages, the knowledge requisite for a public teacher, without much reading of *other* books? Does he claim to be an inspired man? Let him stand forth and prove his inspiration by working a miracle. Just as well may his hearers claim to be inspired, so as to have no need of him, or of any one, as a religious teacher.

"Now the positions, which I would take to show the connection between *intellectual furniture* and *success* in a minister are these four;—a man must have *knowledge* himself, before he can teach others—he must have *capacity* to learn, before he can acquire knowledge—he must have *time* to learn—and he must have *instruction*. The first is

self-evident. The second admits no diversity of opinion, except as to the *degree* of native talent, which is necessary to a minister. Concerning this too, all will agree thus far, that the highest powers of genius may find ample scope in this work; and that on the other hand, decided weakness of intellect is a disqualification. He that stands on middle ground, between these two limits—he that has a fair average of native talent with other men, may with a good heart, and adequate culture, be a successful minister. *Good sense he must have;* but brilliant powers are by no means indispensable.

"It is self-evident too, that he must have *time* to learn, before he can hope for success in his work. Common sense decides so, in regard to *all* acquisitions, which are to be made by *study*. In the first schools of Europe, established for the two great professions, law and medicine, the period of study is *three*, *four*, and in some cases, *five* years, superadded to an academical education. In the same departments, three years of professional study is made a legal requisite, in different parts of our own country. But is the care of men's *immortal* interests a business that demands less maturity of preparation, than that of their *bodies* or *estates?* Is the interpretation of the sacred oracles, and the preaching of the everlasting gospel, so trifling an affair, that it may be safely left to any novice, who chooses to undertake it? Plainly, he cannot be a successful teacher in the church of God, who has not had *time* to learn. The knowledge that he needs is to be gained, not by intuition, not by inspiration, not by any 'royal road,' but by patient, long continued study. Solomon has told him all the secret of gaining this knowledge; he must *dig* for it, as for hidden treasures.

"Need I add that he must have *instruction?* The obvious necessity of this was felt by the fathers of New England, those pious and sagacious men, who founded colleges

with the primary view of raising up an educated ministry for their descendants. And to these wise provisions, men of like spirit have added the endowment of theological seminaries, that the sons of the church, instead of rushing self-taught into this work, might enjoy the best advantages of professional instruction.

"But it is said, 'how can a young man of ardent piety spend year after year in preparatory study, while there are so few religious teachers, and so many destitute churches, and perishing sinners around him? That young man ought to go at once to these starving souls with the bread of life.' So, excellent men, and even ministers have argued, and often remonstrated with the pious student, and perhaps have thrown him into serious perplexity as to his own duty. Now to relieve this perplexity, should he come to me for counsel, I would ask him—Why did *Christ* delay the commencement of his ministry till he was thirty years of age? Was he not as well qualified as you to preach at twenty-five? Were there no perishing sinners around him? Was there no lack of ministers then to teach the way of God in truth? Had you been in his place, you would have begun to preach, it seems, just so soon as you had happened to feel deeply the dreadful condition of sinners; and would have summoned to your aid, not *twelve* apostles, but *twelve thousand.* Are you then more wise than Christ? more benevolent than Christ to the souls of men?

"Besides, is a young man of course qualified to be a religious teacher, because he is ardently pious? Then the wisest men, in every age, have been mistaken. Then colleges, and theological seminaries, and education societies, are a useless incumbrance to the world. But if preparation is *necessary*, God has decided that these vacant churches and perishing sinners must *wait*, till the preparation is made by *study*, for it is not made now by miracles. And there is no hardship, on this supposition

more than on the other, if piety were all that the churches should desire in ministers, still they must *wait*, for God to make pious men. For if all such men, who hope to enter the ministry, were taken from our seminaries, and colleges, and academies too, and made preachers at once, the cry for more laborers would still come from every corner of the land.

"Still some may urge by way of objection that facts, and the aspects of Providence, are against this reasoning. Ministers have been very successful with but little study; and the wants of the world are so urgent, that we must dispense with preparatory qualifications, except a good heart and good sense.

"That such men as John Newton and Thomas Scott have been a great blessing to the church, it were as idle to doubt, as it is, that their usefulness would have been far more eminent, with an adequate early education. But see what is the result, if you try the principle assumed in the objection by common sense. A man of capacity and integrity, is a farmer, a skillful farmer; does it follow that, with all his good sense and knowledge of husbandry, he could manage a *ship* in a tempest? and if he should do it, would it therefore be safe to commit all the concerns of navigation to farmers? Another man is a skillful *merchant*, and knows the quality and price of every article he deals out to his customers; is he therefore qualified to deal out *medicines* to the sick? Another is a skillful *lawyer;* but give him the surgeon's knife, and call him to perform an operation; are you sure that he would do it with success? I need not wait for an answer to such inquiries. Then take this farmer, this merchant, this lawyer, and suppose each to be ardently pious, if you please; and ask common sense whether he would, of course, be a successful interpreter of the Bible, or preacher of the gospel?

"If any one demands that I should tell, more particu-

larly, *how* deficiency in theological knowledge will hinder a preacher's success, I answer,—In the first place, his public instructions will fail to interest intelligent hearers. Some such hearers he will have, in this age of mental activity; when reading and thinking are so customary, even among common men. Should they be satisfied for a few weeks or months, they will ultimately come to perceive, that his sermons are trite and feeble in thought. This result is quite certain, if he is only a common man, with common efforts.

"Or, in the second place, if he aims to retrieve the past deficiencies of his education, by great and special efforts, in his preparations to preach, while, at the same time, he sustains the great, and various, and arduous duties of his office, *he is a dead man;* he will sink into hopeless infirmity, or a premature grave.

"Or, in the third place, if he attempts to bring up all arrears, by incessant study, while he saves his life by neglect of pastoral duties, though he should become a tolerable *preacher*, he is a *dead man* in another respect; there will be a sad failure in the amount of his usefulness.

"Facts are full of instruction on this subject. Not a few young men of bright promise, who might have become champions of the truth, have been so impatient to hasten into the ministry, that they have fatally blighted their own prospects; and instead of attaining to distinguished success, have scarcely reached the point of mediocrity. The minister now, whose maxim is to expect little things, and attempt little things, mistakes the day in which he lives. What was *knowledge* in the thirteenth century, is *ignorance* now. What was *energy* then, is *imbecility* and *stupidity* now. As was said in another case, it becomes not our sacred profession, in this period of intellectual progress, to remain like the ship that is moored to its station, only to mark the rapidity of the current that is

sweeping by. Let the intelligence of the age outstrip us, and leave us behind, and religion would sink, with its teachers, into insignificance. Ignorance cannot wield this intelligence. Give to the church a feeble ministry, and the world breaks from your hold; your main spring of moral influence is gone.

"Go on then, my dear sir, in the arduous and exalted work to which you are devoted. God grant you success in the noble enterprise of multiplying able and holy ministers of his truth. It is a cause for which good men have prayed and will pray, without ceasing. It is a cause on which God has smiled, and will smile, with approbation."

With all his solicitude, however, that the training of candidates for the sacred office should be thorough, Dr. Porter was scrupulously attentive to the *minutiæ* of professional character. Of this we may find illustration in the subjoined letter to a young clergyman, on the use of *personal pronouns*.

"My dear Sir,

"I am happy in the confidence I feel that you possess the great elementary qualifications requisite in the sacred work on which you have entered. Compared with these qualifications, there are numerous minor things which are but as dust in the balance; and yet no wise preacher would wish to indulge himself in any careless infelicities of language, or in blunders of any sort, even in trifles, that might by any possibility impair his usefulness in a holy and elevated calling. '*Hæ nugæ seria ducent.*'

"My present object is, to caution you against some of these *nugæ* of the pulpit, the principal mischief of which is, that they may raise a question in hearers of intelligence, whether the preacher who falls into them has not something *trifling* in his character.

"An example of my meaning you have in the substitution of the *plural* pronoun for the *singular*, where the preacher means *himself*. You may have observed this in some preachers of respectable sense and scholarship; and yet, if you undertake to analyze the usage, you can hardly fail to lose your gravity, the thing is so ridiculous.

"In the first place, it is a gross violation of English *idiom*, and has no authority from the first orators of the language, either secular or sacred. About thirty years ago, here and there a preacher in England, and in this country, called *himself*, *we*—in imitation of the French idiom. The same tribe of imitators caught at the rhetorical *ah!* of the French pulpit, and the *Mon Dieu!* and other profane invocations of God, introduced to ornament a sentence, in direct violation of Horace's canon, '*Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit.*' All this is gone by, except the partiality for the pronoun *we*, by which now and then a grave minister chooses to designate himself.

"In the next place, as this usage violates English idiom, it of course leads to *confusion of sense*.

"All our grammarians have taught that *I* is a singular, and *we* a plural pronoun. If we do away this distinction by making them identical, or if we amalgamate both into one, the question arises, whether that one expresses unity, or plurality of sense. In regal style, probably the king originally said *we*, meaning himself and court. And yet '*we*, George the IV.' seems plainly to mean but *one man;* and the attempt to make out the rest of the sentence amounts to a burlesque on 'the king's English.' Take an example translated from a proclamation of the Russian emperor: '*We*, Alexander first, autocrat of all the Russias, &c., with respect to *ourself*, we request all our subjects to offer up fervent prayers to God, that he may receive *our souls* into his everlasting kingdom.' Now

if a naughty tyro in grammar should ask his English teacher—'how am I to parse this sentence? how many emperors does it take to make one man? and how many *souls* has that man?' he could only be told that royal style is not intended to be *parsed*, like that of common sense; and especially that this style in foreign idiom, is not subject to the laws of English grammar.

"*Editors* too, are a privileged class of men; though several individuals have so often been associated in this class by partnership, that *we*, as used in this case, is commonly understood to denote *plurality* of sense. '*We* the editor,'—would now sound so strangely, that perhaps this word, in process of time, will come, like 'tongs,' 'bellows,' &c., to have no singular.

"But allowing all convenient latitude to emperors and editors, what occasion has the Christian preacher to confound grammar and sense, in using the personal pronoun? For example, '*we* shall attempt, my brethren, to establish the truth of the following proposition.' Whom does the preacher mean by *we?* Himself and hearers? or himself and other preachers? or himself only? Neither the hearers who are present, nor the fraternity of preachers who are absent, have any thing to do in proving that proposition. Why then should *one* man speak of himself in the *plural*, because he is in the pulpit, any more than if he were talking to a tenth part of these hearers in a conference room, or to one of them in his study, or giving instruction to his child or domestic? Again: '*We* know that while, as a minister of Christ, it is our duty to urge you to repentance, *we* are a sinner before God, as well as you.' That the following examples are not occasional trips of haste is probable, because they are taken from sermons, printed by their authors. 'And now brethren, *we* affectionately ask, why is not this duty faithfully performed by *you* all? What is your objection?' That the

preacher began this address as one man, is evident, because he continues it in the singular—'*I* know that *I* speak to some,' &c., and thus, for some time, *I* goes on with the exhortation which *we* had begun. Again: an address at an ordination has this instance, '*We* know well the anxieties that press upon your spirits at this solemn hour; for *we* have felt them all, and can tell you, after *seven years*' experience, that there is just cause for them all.' The obscurity of sense is cleared up by a little reasoning, thus: the preacher could not mean, '*we* the assembly know,' &c., for they had not been seven years in the ministry; nor '*we* the ecclesiastical council,' for it were marvellous that they should all have been ministers *just* seven years; but, '*we* the preacher know,' &c. This is the correct solution, no doubt; for a little before, this plural preacher calls the candidate, '*my* beloved brother,' and repeatedly says, '*we* speak not,' &c., and '*we* speak,' &c., in reference to what had been said by his single self. In the following quotation, I aim only at substantial, not verbal exactness. '*We* do not offer *ourselves* as *a* learned *expositor* of that revelation which God has given *us;* but *we* say that he is without excuse, who rejects the testimony of God, so often repeated by us, that he "gave his Son to die for *us*."' A revelation given to the preacher! A Saviour given to die for the preacher, in distinction from other men! His incongruous use of pronouns makes him say this; but surely this is not his meaning. One more instance may be added; it is a sentence with which I heard a minister begin his closing prayer after sermon. '*We* pray thee bless the truths which *we* have now dispensed to these dying hearers.' In a petition thus expressed, how could the assembly unite? The hearers had not been dispensing truth.

"Now, my dear sir, if you have fallen into this solecism in pulpit phraseology, just look a moment at the simple

language of Christ and the apostles, and see what a strange transmutation of the New Testament would be made by such a blending of personal pronouns. One example from Paul must suffice. 'Let no man think *us* a fool. Are they Hebrews? so *are we*. Are they Israelites? so *are we*,' &c. 'Thrice *were we* beaten with rods; once *were we* stoned,' &c. What a curious address must this have been to the *Gentile* converts of Corinth!

"But modesty offers its apology. 'Though an apostle might speak of himself in the first person, this would be *egotism* in a common man, especially a young man.' And what is egotism? Not using proper terms to express proper thoughts. It consists in a *spirit of ostentation* with which a man speaks of himself, and not in the words he uses. In illustration of this point, the following anecdote was some time since related by a writer in one of our periodicals. 'Among the theological pupils of the celebrated Dr. Bellamy, was a young man named B———, whose vanity was often offensive to his instructor, and who was one day reading for criticism a manuscript containing many sentences like this—"Such is *my* opinion, whatever others may think, and *I* am confident that *my* opinion is correct." At the close of such a sentence, the Doctor, in his peculiar, authoritative manner, said, "Stop, B———, *I, I*, who is this *I?*"' The writer adds—'When I hear a preacher, who seems to be nothing more than *one man*, saying to his hearers—"*We*, as an ambassador of the cross, exhort you to receive the truths which *we* have now delivered," I often feel inclined to say—Stop—who is this *we?*'

"There are several other points of sagacious refinement in the phraseology of the pulpit, to which I should have called your attention, had I not extended the foregoing remarks beyond my own intentions. One of these is, the habit of some spruce young preachers, 'righteous over

much' in accuracy, who say, 'the *first two* and the *last two*' verses of a psalm, instead of the *two first*, &c.

"Perhaps at some convenient time I may give you some further hints on these 'trifles' of our profession."*

Numerous and weighty as were the duties growing out of his official connections, Dr. Porter felt that other responsibilities also devolved upon him. In guiding, sustaining, and quickening the various movements of benevolence, he felt bound as a Christian philanthropist to lend the whole weight of his influence. Appointed to watch for souls as one that must give account, and occupying a commanding post of observation, he was ever wakeful. A subject which he regarded as having an important bearing on the welfare of Zion, was the infringement of the rights and usages of Congregational churches, especially as practiced in Massachusetts under the sanction of judicial decisions. Endued with discernment to detect, and sensibility to feel the injuries inflicted on others, he contemplated with the liveliest emotions, the ejectment of laborious and able pastors from their pulpits; the exile of churches from sanctuaries, which in some instances they had chiefly contributed in erecting; and the perversion of funds, which pious charity had given them, and an undisputed title to which they had enjoyed through successive generations, by the united decision of usage and equity. The language of remonstrance against such usurpation he frankly and frequently uttered.

In concluding this view of Dr. Porter's professional character, it may be proper to subjoin the following illustrations found among his MSS., of the corporate capacity of Congregational churches.

"Not to dwell on the question whether churches were *originally* corporate bodies in New England, there can be

* See Spirit of the Pilgrims, vol. ii. p. 645.

no doubt that they became so by the act of 1754,—that is, the deacons were incorporated to hold property for the church, under the supervision of the church.

"Cases supposed as examples:—

"1. A legacy of $5,000 is given to a Congregational church in Massachusetts, unrestricted by any conditions; the annual income given to the absolute disposal of the church. They manage it by instructions to their deacons. By an unusual coincidence of things, death and removal diminish the members of the parish, and at last in a moment of excitement, the few remaining members go off by certificate to other sects; not one voter is left. The church goes on as a *church*, and votes yearly to give the income of their fund to the minister, and record their votes in the church records.

"Quere. 1. Does this church, or does it not, 'subsist, without any religious community to which it is attached?'

"2. If they do *subsist* still, that is, if a church can retain its identity and its rights, though the parish has withdrawn, why may it not retain the same identity and rights, after it has withdrawn from the parish? Or,

"3. If the church loses her identity by the withdrawing of the parish, then whose are her funds? Can heirs at law claim them on the ground of any moral or civil delinquency in the church? Or by what sort of action can they sue for the recovery of this property?

"Case 2. $7,000 are given by a pious wealthy man to the deacons of a church, in trust (as before); and $7,000 to the directors of a bible society in the same village, committed to their absolute discretion. The deacons have corporate powers, no one doubts:—the directors also. Both add the annual income to the principal. After five years, a difficulty arises with the parish; the church withdraw with their fund. The directors (who are included in the church) also withdraw, and worship together. Will an

action lie against the deacons to get the church fund for the parish? What sort of action? Why will not a similar action lie also against the directors?

"Case 3. $6,000 are given to a Congregational church as before; the interest is added to the principal. The parish negotiate to have it applied to the support of public worship. When it has amounted to $10,000, the church vote to apply the income for one year to support worship, or to give $600 to the parish. They vote to do the same annually for five years, when the minister dies. The parish call a Universalist; and the church withdraw. A new church is formed in the old house, avowedly Universalist, but calling itself Congregationalist. They sue the deacons for the fund.—The identity of the church is predicated on the old *place* of worship.

"Case 4. Same facts.—After seven years the meeting house is burnt. There are one hundred and two voters. Forty church members and ten others, fifty in all, vote to rebuild in one place; fifty two, possessing one fourth of the property in the parish, and of low character, vote to unite in another place. The strife is not about doctrine but *place*. They divide—the fifty, including the whole church, the intelligence and worth of the society, build a handsome and spacious house:—the others an inferior one, (which is the first parish?) settles a minister and forms a new church, Congregational in name, but on Universalist principles. By what action can they claim the funds?"

CHAPTER XVI.

SOCIAL CHARACTER.

Manners—Social qualities—Familiar letters—Principles of family government—Paternal directions—Judicious management of pecuniary affairs—Contributions—Habits as to personal expenditures, equipage, &c.—Hospitality—Summary view of his social character.

The highest degree of personal enjoyment in the present life, results from the union of happy social temperament with Christian resignation. The man in whom God has wrought this union, has within himself means of usefulness, which others do not possess, and a source of perennial enjoyment to which others are strangers. Alone, he is happy in communion with himself and with God; in society, his happiness is increased by contributing to that of his associates. With however much of plausibility the misanthrope might inquire in reference to many of his species,

> "Did man compute
> Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
> Such hours 'gainst years of life;—say would he name
> Threescore?"—

the interrogatory would be impertinent in the case of such an individual. With all his bodily sufferings, and his nu-

merous unusual calls to practice self-denial, Dr. Porter was uniformly a *happy* man. Though he valued life chiefly as affording opportunity to glorify God in usefulness to his fellow-men, he highly estimated the pleasures of social, and especially those of Christian intercourse.

His manners were simple, natural, and dignified. Though there was something in his demeanor that often imposed restraint on a stranger introduced to his presence; there was nothing repulsive, nothing which the stranger did not spontaneously feel would be removed by slight acquaintance. Though he was not fluent in conversation, except with intimate friends, he had no appearance of studied reserve, or of a willingness to keep himself aloof from society. So gentle and conciliating was his mode of intercourse with strangers, and so extensive was his knowledge derived from books, and from accurate observation of human conduct in all the variety of circumstances in which his professional duties and his frequent journeys had placed him, that his fellow-travellers commonly conceived for him a degree of respect which rendered it a pleasure to them to do him kindnesses. So favorable was the impression he usually made on all with whom he was even temporarily associated, that on his journeys he rarely had occasion to complain of the negligence of servants or other agents of public conveyances, and still more rarely of their disrespect or insolence.

Among the social qualities of Dr. Porter, *frankness* held a prominent place. He was above disguise. He was either silent or spoke the sentiments of his heart. Duplicity in all its forms he abhorred. Nothing more was needed to destroy his respect for an individual than a single distinct exhibition of this trait of character. Though he could and often did, with characteristic delicacy, express to his friends a favorable opinion of their character, when he thought the expression was

demanded by justice, or would subserve a useful end, he rarely dealt in the language of compliment, never in flattery. He was no less unwilling to receive it himself than to offer it to others. "I never knew a man," he once remarked to the writer, "who dealt much in flattery, that was not fond of it in return." His aversion to insincerity in language, was united with an equally strong aversion to ostentation in action. In this respect he was the same in every relation of life. His professions were always sincere. With propriety it may be said of him, as it is said of Dr. Dwight;—"It is believed, that in no instance whatever was he even suspected to connect a private selfish end, his own personal benefit, or the advancement of any member of his family, with that which was avowed and ostensible. The purposes which he proposed were the only purposes he had in view. To accomplish them he would not stoop to management and finesse. They were honorable purposes. He declared them with the sincerity of truth, and pursued them with the dignity of virtue. So perfectly known was his character in this respect, that the instance probably cannot be named, in which any man ventured to approach him for his assistance in a manner which was not direct and honorable." Dr. Porter's frankness rendered him unwilling to be intrusted with the secrets of others, and induced him to resolve that he would "deal in secrets as little as possible." Though sufficiently ready to communicate to his friends his feelings, his wishes, and his designs, he rarely made disclosures which in any change of circumstances could place him at their mercy. Consequently much as he loved society, highly as he prized the attachment of friends, and sincerely as he reciprocated that attachment, his intimacies were very few.

Another obvious trait of Dr. Porter's social character, was *cheerfulness*. To those who were accustomed to see

him from day to day, and were aware of the nature and extent of his bodily sufferings, his freedom from depression was a subject of admiration. There was, indeed, no unusual flow of animation, no buoyancy of spirits; but a steady, uniform cheerfulness, which showed that he had well learned "in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content." In sickness, his remarks were often characterized by a kind of playfulness and good humor, adapted to alleviate the solicitude of his attendants, if not to render their services a pleasure to themselves. In one instance, having occasion to shave himself when much emaciated by sickness, he playfully remarked to his attendant, "I do not know but my razor and my cheek bones will have a contention." Often when exercised with severe pain, he attended as usual to the calls of business, or friendship; and so perfect was his control of his feelings, that no indications of suffering were perceptible, excepting by his intimate acquaintance.

In conversation he sometimes allowed himself in animated repartee, and occasionally in sallies of wit. And at times he exhibited no doubtful indications of ability to employ sarcasm with powerful effect. In this, however, he confined himself to the same limits he prescribed for others—to indulge in it but sparingly, and only for a useful end. Irony he deemed sometimes allowable; allowable even in the pulpit, employed as Christ employed it. But with the use of wit in the pulpit, as generally understood, he held no compromise. He discarded it as utterly unbecoming the sacredness of the place; and against it used to warn his pupils in unqualified terms. His indulgence in wit even in conversation, was chiefly confined to the relation of anecdotes for the purposes of illustration, which he often did with much appositeness and effect. A clergyman who was several years associated with him as a director of a benevolent society,

remarked to the writer, that at the sessions of the board, Dr. Porter commonly said but little, but often exerted a controlling influence in their deliberations, by suggesting, in his happy manner, pertinent and sometimes quaint illustrations.

He was peculiarly free from irascibility. His spirit, his manners, his whole appearance, certainly exempted him more than most men from exposure to the assaults of rudeness or impertinence; but when thus exposed, he maintained his wonted serenity and composure. We have never heard of an instance where in discussion he gave his adversary the advantage by an exhibition of temper, or where in his intercourse with men in any circumstances, he betrayed undue excitement.

Few men are more fond of society than was Dr. Porter. And though he participated in the pleasures of social intercourse with a high relish, his attachment to them sprung not more from personal considerations, than from a benevolent regard to the gratification and improvement of others. His social qualities he made as much a subject of study and cultivation as those of his intellect and heart, from the conviction of their importance to the most attractive exhibition of Christian character, and to his highest usefulness as an ambassador of Christ. With him it was a settled principle, that whatever would increase his acceptableness in this capacity, demanded attention. His friendships were sincere and ardent. And though, even when surrounded by those he most loved and confided in, he never allowed himself to forget that a "little folly" is detractious in him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor; he could and did, in familiar intercourse, exhibit a measure of natural kindness and amiableness; a cheerful surrender of his own convenience to that of others, and a lively interest in their enjoyment, which won the affections of all who were favored with his

society. These features of his social character, through every period of his life secured the confidence and attachment of his associates. Yet with all his urbanity, and solicitude to please, he possessed uncommon independence and decision. "The man," said he to a clergyman who, on a certain occasion, continued urging him to preach after he had declined on account of feeble health—"the man who cannot say *no*, and stand to it, is of little account in this world."

The reader is here presented with a few of Dr. Porter's letters, selected partly as specimens of his familiar correspondence, and partly as illustrating the aspect of his character now under consideration. The first was written a few months after his ordination, to a brother in law.

"*Washington, Jan.* 3, 1797.

"Dear Sir,

"I have an opportunity to write you a line which I cannot fail to improve. I had a prosperous journey from Vermont; and have enjoyed my health since. We have nothing particularly important here. It is a healthy time. Our winter has hitherto been severe. Since I last wrote you, you have doubtless heard that I have exchanged my candidate *troubles*, for the *troubles* of a minister. To be serious, I am now among an agreeable people. I have the benefit of a neighborhood that is improved, and a society that is benevolent and kind. I trust however, that I know enough of human nature, not to consider these things as *everlasting*. But I shall keep my staff in my hand, and be waiting for the word *march*, like my brethren the prophets. Our circumstances here where societies are old and well organized, are not altogether similar to those of our brethren in Vermont, who have to stem the current of fluctuating opinions. But we have some *thorns* and

thistles in this pleasant land. In short a minister's life is far from being most eligible as to temporal considerations. It has its sacrifices, which nothing but sincerity and a good conscience can counterbalance.

"My best love to sister A———. Tell her, to that question which she asked me last fall, I answer *yes*, and should have done it then, had it not been for Capt. F. If she should add to her question, *who*, and *where*, and *when?* or any such little words, tell her, *come and see*—come next winter and see. I am in haste. Remember me with much affection to our Tinmouth friends at M. I am your distant, but ever affectionate friend and brother.

"Tell A—— to send me a catalogue of her boys."

Three or four letters which follow, were addressed to an intimate friend in Connecticut, who was his room-mate during his whole course of classical and professional study.

"*Andover, March* 12, 1812.

"Brother Swift,

"The first thought that strikes me on writing your name is, that after spending twenty years in the most familiar intercourse of friendship, we are at length, in Providence removed from each other. But this intercourse, however it may henceforward be subject to interruptions for a few years, will not cease in *this life*, and I humbly trust will neither cease nor be interrupted in the *next*.

"My journey hither was prosperous beyond all expectation. For a part of six days while I was travelling, the weather was uninterruptedly good; and the sleighing was perfect. Not a foot of bare ground was to be seen through the whole way, excepting one little spot in Charlestown, about a rod. I have been received with great cordiality by the good men in this region; with the bad I have had no intercourse. For several days I have been troubled

with a cold and deafness of one ear, but my health is on the whole as good as before I left Connecticut. And I am pretty well satisfied that nothing but a good heart and comfortable health will be requisite to make my situation here very pleasant. Concerning the religious affairs of this commonwealth, the moral and civil character of the people, I have had no opportunity to form any new opinions. The face of the country hereabouts, so far as I can judge while it is covered with snow, is more pleasant than I expected. The Foreign Mission has had an electric influence on Christians in this region. It promises to become the grave of their jealousies, and the central point of their efforts. Attempts will be made to organize missionary societies in different parts of Connecticut next May. Supplies of Buchanan's book and of Dr. Wood's sermon, &c., will be sent on soon. I hope our brethren will unite to aid the good cause.

"Now for your affairs. When I last saw you I did not expect to come away so soon. I know you must be dismissed. I know you will be dismissed on Christian principles and with unblemished reputation. But I wish to know *when*, and every interesting circumstance respecting the event. I do hope my old people will have wisdom enough to invite you there immediately on your dismission. But I have seen the subtlety of Satan, and the caprice of men in so many forms, as to forbid any sanguine calculations on what is future.

"Write immediately. I shall be here till the first Wednesday in May, and shall with leave of Providence attend Hartford Election on my return. Cannot I see you there? If you have opportunity, show this to Mrs. Porter. My love to Mrs. S—— and the family.

"Immutably yours."

"My best love to the brethren."

"*Andover, Feb.* 10, 1813.

"Brother Swift,

"Your last letter of November was a long time in coming, having been missent. The reasons of my not answering sooner were stated in a letter to brother ———, which was equally intended for you. Even now I should hardly have taken my pen, were I not straitened in spirit to hear from you, more than I am straitened for time to write. I inferred from your last that you would probably leave ———. I have since been informed, very indirectly, that you had done so, and were preaching at ———; then again that you was not to be there through the winter; that it was very sickly there, &c. Now, how do you think I can be easy to have only broken hints about these matters, when I want to know every syllable; and one half hour of yours lent to me, would lighten and sweeten my labors for a week. I have seen brother Backus's inaugural sermon, but have not heard a word directly from him. I think the job of moving will reduce his great cheeks; but I hope the Lord will be with him and make him an instrument of much good.

"Your old brother."

"*Andover, April* 2, 1813.

"Brother Swift,

"Your welcome letter of March 26th came to-day. Pray never make another apology for writing often. My answer must be short. Last Friday night, after a drooping week, I had a violent attack of *pleurisy*. The pain in my side was so intense that I felt disposed to scream at every breath, and yet I could not scream for want of breath. Mrs. Porter called a physician immediately, and by his help, together with her judicious and constant nursing, I was relieved before morning, and have been slowly mending since; so that yesterday and to-day I have

ridden out; but have done no business. With the blessing of Providence, I hope a few days prudent attention may restore me. I never felt myself literally near eternity before last Friday night. Then for a little time it was doubtful whether I could breathe for half an hour longer. If, as it is not impossible, some such unexpected moment should snap asunder the ties that have united me to you and other Christian friends, the separation I humbly hope will be but momentary; and only preparatory to a perfect union of hearts that shall be without end and without interruption.

"I think you must go to ———. From all I know of the case, the call I think is as clear as there was any reason to expect in these 'evil times.' The first part of their condition ought to be removed; to the second I see no objection, only that it is much ado about nothing. It may give occasion to factious individuals to make trouble; especially as connected with the first clause. If they mean the last as explanatory of the first—then the first is needless; if they mean more by the first, it is a downright impropriety under a fair cloak. Your sound judgment will guide.

"As to ———, Esq., he is a strange mortal; good properties are curiously blended with bad in his character,—generosity, respect for ministers and old habits, with roughness, pride of opinion, malignity to enemies—piety ——— in *profession*. If the ground is clear in other respects, be not afraid of him. When he finds that you are *not* his enemy and that you respect your duty and yourself, he will respect you. If not, he cannot hurt you. His tongue will be tied by necessity—it will soon be tied by *death*. Indeed I should not be disappointed if he and his son should in two years be your most ardent friends.

"I have already exceeded my purpose and my strength: so with best love to your dear family,

"I remain yours."

"*Andover, Jan.* 13, 1814.

"Dear Brother,

"If it did but afford me as much satisfaction to answer your letters as it does to receive them, I should write at least once a week. But I have no disposition to interrupt the relation which Providence has established betwixt giving and receiving; and I hope you will not think me more selfish than I used to be. In truth, I have delayed writing a few days, because very much occupied. Mrs. Porter's health has been impaired this winter by frequent attacks of erysipelas, though I hope she will soon enjoy her usual health. The little boy has been quite sick a few days with hooping cough and a fever, but is better. My own health is slender. Mrs. H. has been with us a week, and expects to stay sometime. From the friendship I bear her, and the memory of her dear deceased husband, I have engaged to do what I can towards preparing the volume of sermons which is to be published. I have engaged also, if it should be indispensable, to write the sketch of his character to be inserted in the volume. By my suggestion she has written to Dr. Dwight, to engage him to undertake it, if he will. I presume the subscription in your region will be liberal for the sermons.

"The various topics of your letter were deeply interesting to us. I am much rejoiced at the prosperous sale of your property at ———; because I apprehended no small difficulty on that subject. I wish Mr. ——— could have had your house, but you was certainly under no obligation to sustain an essential sacrifice for his accommodation. I am sure that he will need your counsel and friendly offices

in many ways, and have no doubt of your disposition to give him every possible aid. If I have not mistaken his temper, he will receive with affection and gratitude every token of your friendship. Would God that I had as much comfort concerning my old people and their pastor, as you have concerning R———.* My friends at W. are silent about their affairs, but from other sources rumors reach my ears continually of very ominous import. These you must know distress me. But the will of the Lord be done.

"I very much rejoice in your prospects of comfort and usefulness at Derby. If God permit, I hope to see you among your new people next May. You know I have as much reliance on your judgment as on any man's; and more probably than you have on your own. But let me suggest a few hints—and if they are useless, they are cheap, as they cost only a little of my time to write and of yours to read.

"You speak of a new meeting-house. I hope you will watch the pulse of Derby, to *push* that point. Every society consists of various sorts of men; and every man is actuated by various principles. In the absence of better principles, parish pride is an excitement to certain sorts of men to act well. I have no doubt that your people will be sufficiently proud of their new minister. But they will respect their minister and the Sabbath more, love one another better, and on all accounts feel happier and even *richer*, for building a meeting-house. Your own experience will suggest the importance of making the most of circumstances. I think ministers have often erred in suffering the *first love* of their people to pass away unimproved, which a proper forecast and energy might have turned to great account. I hope you will *insist* on punc-

* Two or three persons preceded the present worthy occupant of Dr. Porter's pulpit.

tual payment of salary. Do *set down your foot* on this subject, and *keep it down*, unless it should seem best to raise it now and then, that you may set it down again more firmly.

If I were to be re-settled in the ministry, I would have a list of each family in my parish at first, with every child's name; and note each special peculiarity of any family or person, that I could fairly ascertain. I would pay much attention to children and youth, and if possible get an ascendency over the influential youth. And though if I were to commence preaching again at twenty-two, I should feel it my prime duty to study—I think if I were to enter into a new charge now, I should try to make the most of prayer-meetings and religious visits. Mr. Payson of Portland has done wonders in this way, whereas Dr. ——— has less parochial influence than he would have if more active. I know my dear brother you need no suggestions from me. Do write me once a month; and if I cannot answer punctually, my amanuensis will do it.—Do push the Panoplist into circulation."

The two following letters were addressed to a friend at that time in Europe.

"*Andover, Sept.* 15, 1817.

"My dear Sir,

"Your welcome favor of June 30th is received. I regret that I am obliged to answer it amidst the distractions of preparation for our anniversary, or delay till November, when it may be too late. I rejoice that an all-merciful Providence has been propitious to you thus far in your absence, and hope you may be returned in safety to the sphere of benevolent action which you left. In the mean time you may be doing much good. The hints in your letter respecting a digested history of revivals in our

churches are important. I know not why a subject of such general interest should have slept so long, and I am determined if God will to see its execution committed to some able hand. I wish you while in Europe, for my satisfaction, to commit to paper your remarks on the characteristic difference betwixt the European and American pulpit, as to subjects of sermons, method, length, style, spirit, delivery, &c. Any remarks on *preaching* will be interesting. Also on the English system of doing good. If you can procure me the *rhetorical* work of Vossius, or any new works on preaching, or English philology, I shall esteem it a great favor.

"I received your papers in Georgia, for which I thank you. On my return I attended General Assembly. Of the proceedings of that body you are probably informed; but I will add a word. The first week was full of apprehension; an explosion was on all hands expected. It was clearly the policy of good and sound men to keep that body from separation, an event which Dr. ——— was said to anticipate with satisfaction. About twelve chief men from both sides, met silently, talked freely, explained, prayed. The meeting was solemn, and put out half the fire. An adjourned meeting smothered the rest. Dr. ———, from excessive caution, came up by degrees to a bold stand; condemned the Philadelphia synodical letter in a powerful speech, and the vote of the Assembly to the astonishment of all was *unanimous*. Hopkinsianism, as they call it, is to be tolerated in the Presbyterian church, and the growing strength of the west will now settle the majority speedily and finally.

"I returned from Georgia on horseback, with increased health, till a severe cold in Philadelphia, terminating in a pleurisy after I reached home, put me down for a season. I am now restored to comfortable health by the kindness of that Providence to whom I owe my life and its innumer-

able blessings. Our seminary has near seventy students, and we expect a class of about forty to enter in November. Next week I am to commence a visit to six northern colleges, for public purposes, especially appertaining to the means of increasing the number of good ministers.

"In great haste, truly yours."

"P. S. I have it not in my power at present to collect any number of reports, &c., but hastily put together a few pamphlets, which as they will be useless to yourself, you may give to Rev. Legh Richmond or Mr. Burder, or any one else who will accept them."

"*Andover, Jan.* 30, 1818.

"My dear Sir,

"Your obliging favor of October 29, is duly received. I rejoice that a guardian Providence has returned you in safety from your long excursion on the continent. It is unpleasant again to write you in haste, but I must do so or omit writing altogether. We have undertaken to new-model our American Education Society, with a view to extensive operations in remote States, and circumstances have thrown the weight of this arduous business on my hands. This is the fourth week that I have been almost wholly devoted to it, and I have yet many letters and packages to make up for to-morrow. You will be pleased to know that we now have one hundred and twelve beneficiaries; and that the spirit is spreading. The western district of New-York have recently formed a noble society. You will also be gratified to know that our beloved theological seminary prospers greatly. Our new building is one of the finest in the United States, and our new class, consisting of forty two members, contains many *first rate* young men. Our whole number is eighty-one. One of our last class is laboring with great effect in New-

York city—another is just stationed at Utica, and another is to succeed Dr. Strong, at Hartford.

"On the subject of making British Christians acquainted with our religious concerns, we all felt the remarks of your letter last summer; and I have requested brother H——, now of Pittsfield, Mass., to write a book, exhibiting the grand movements in the kingdom of grace, to be introduced with a preparatory sketch of the last fifty years, and followed up with a digested view of modern revivals. I wish it may be to the church what Robertson's Charles Fifth is to the civil world.

"I send a few pamphlets which you will use according to your discretion. The manuscript sermon of Dr. Bellamy, which is enclosed, though illegible, may amuse some one who knows his character. I will follow it with one of President Edwards and Dr. Hopkins, if they can be had. This reminds me of a favor I wish to ask. You know how great a rarity it would be to show in our library, a manuscript of Watts, or Doddridge, or Thomas Scott, or John Newton. Some relic of any English Father would be highly esteemed.

"I must finish, as the last moment of my time is gone before the package must take its departure. For the purpose just alluded to and for other general purposes, which you can easily understand, I wish to exchange a letter, say once a year, with some minister, who is intelligent and evangelical, in London or vicinity. Will you negotiate this thing for me and give me word? I had thought of Mr. Burder or Mr. Tracy, but prefer leaving the thing to you.

"With inviolable regard, yours."

"P. S. Phillips Academy is smoking in ashes, having been burnt down last night.

"I forget what pamphlets I sent before."

The following, addressed to his colleague, the present Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the theological seminary, is dated

"*Andover, Oct.* 5, 1829.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"Before this time, doubtless, you are officially informed of your election to the Brown Professorship in our seminary. The choice I suppose was unanimous in both Boards. The importance of the seminary to the church of God, in this country and others, and through all time;—and the necessity that its officers be men of substantial character as to piety, judgment, sober orthodoxy, and absolute devotedness to their work, in order that their influence may be salutary here, and adapted to secure public confidence, are things which you know already, as well as I could tell you. The guardians of these sacred interests have selected you to be associated in the great work to be done here; and my object in writing this hasty letter, is to say, that I confidently hope you will accept the appointment, and that speedily.

"Our days of peril and perplexity I hope are past. Our trustees have survived the mischiefs attendant on the original amalgamation aimed at in forming the institution. Both Boards combine as much solid excellence as can be found in any similar bodies, and more than I know in any other.

"You are aware of the general estimation in which you have been held by myself; and though Dr. W. was absent when the election was made, and has been since, you need not have any doubt, that the faculty will welcome you as a fellow-laborer, with the most perfect cordiality. I can assure you that you have nothing to fear on this score. Indeed nothing in the past or present state of the seminary need to be any ground of apprehension on your part.

"Presuming, as I must, that you will view this to be a plain call of Providence, let me say that I hope you will be satisfied to take the shortest and easiest way of deciding the case, viz. to make known to your people and to the Consociation, your judgment in favor of acceptance. From settled usage in such cases, I cannot doubt that an enlightened church and council would decide on your dismission, without such a decision of your own; but from much observation I am quite clear that the other course is best.

"I am anxious too that you should come immediately, I mean *as soon as possible.* The probability is that I must be absent this winter, on account of broken health; and though an extra instructor of the senior class will be provided, your presence here is needed, to assist in preaching, and in criticising sermons, and to make all convenient despatch for entering on your own more special duties of instruction.

"My dear brother, lay this subject before God. Ask him if the annual charge of one hundred and forty young ministers is not more important than that of any parish in Christendom?—and in the light of eternity decide what he 'will have you to do.'

"If you write me something on this subject immediately on receipt of this, I shall feel much obliged.

"Affectionately yours."

We close this selection from Dr. P.'s familiar letters, with two which were addressed to Mrs. Porter.

"*New York, July* 18, 1827.

"My dear Wife,

"You know where I slept the night after leaving Boston, or rather, *did not sleep*, for the same reason that gave me so much inconvenience one night on our Connec-

ticut journey, and many other nights in past journeyings. If I were an emperor, and obliged to travel, there is one annoyance to sleep that I should dread as much as 'cares of state.' Our cavalcade of coaches from 7 o'clock to 12, was five in number. The one in which I was seated had eight passengers, well-bred, all but an old lady whose vocal organs were incessantly employed, in telling the wonders she had seen, and read, and heard of in Boston. I escaped any direct address by a posture of slumber. On board the boat, Chancellor Livingston, were about sixty passengers, two ministers besides myself. At dinner the talkative old lady sat next me, and soon after being seated pointed to the decanter before me, and asked, 'Is that brandy?' I said nothing. She repeated the question, 'is that *brandy?*' I said, 'it looks like it,' and said no more. 'I wish a little of it,' said she, 'only a *little.*' My difficulty in understanding her question was observed by ladies and others that sat near, and produced a significant look and shrug across the table. I handed the decanter at last, and observed—'Ladies in many places are forming temperance societies.' 'I know it,' said she, 'but some people cannot do without a little spirit.' This occurrence explained the intolerable loquacity of the morning. I observed but one other passenger use brandy, and that was a *man.* At tea a man was near me, who, as I afterwards learned, began life with a fine estate and high prospects of reputation, but now talked so foolishly as to make some respectable acquaintances at the table blush for him, because he had 'let in a thief at the mouth, to steal away his brains.' At 11 o'clock, this same wretched man awoke, having slept three hours, and with two or three associates, called for spirits, and set up such a clamor of tongues, that no passenger could sleep for an hour. All this, though an unexpected vexation, does not discourage me as to the ultimate triumph of the temperance cause. One year

more will banish decanters from all the tables of our steam-boats.

"I cannot say any thing as to my return, but cheerfully commit my dear wife and all the great interests of the beloved seminary, to the care of a gracious Providence.

"With much love to my dear brethren and the neighbors, I am truly and ever yours."

"*Saratoga Springs, Aug.* 8, 1829.

"My dear Wife,

"As to my health, it is gradually mending. Dr. Mitchell of Philadelphia, and Dr.'s Ives and Willet of New York, examined my chest with a stethoscope, a modern instrument, to determine the state of the vital organs, and the result of their investigations is I suppose decisive that there is no *organic* disease of the lungs, that has produced the cough, but that this proceeds from other causes. The damp and fœtid atmosphere of New York deranged my bowels, as well as disturbed my lungs. But for some days, I have had no cough worthy of notice. Still I am satisfied that these waters are not adapted to my present state.

"Had I seen less of men than I have, the motley assemblage here, in which the aged and the young, the beautiful and the deformed, the wealthy and the pennyless, the pious and the profane, the intelligent and the foolish, I might add, the subjects of no disease but the 'madness of the heart,' and the subjects of every distressing and mortal malady 'that flesh is heir to,'—strangely congregated in this village, would fill me with curiosity and surprise. As it is, I look on a few men and women here with respect, and on the rest with an indifference that it should alarm me, or a contempt that it should distress me to feel towards any human being. The gay triflers I pity; the riotous and profane I abhor; and yet I am self-rebuked

when I reflect how would Brainerd feel towards these immortal creatures of God, hastening onward to his bar.

"My best love to our family, and to those of our beloved circle. Truly and ever yours."

Though Dr. Porter was not a father, he was from an early period after his settlement in the ministry, the head of a family; and in this relation, with scarcely a year's interruption to the close of his life, he discharged the duties of a father towards a succession of the children of his relatives or other friends. In the administration of family government he united paternal solicitude with enlarged views of parental responsibility. Fully aware that

> "Children like oziers, take the bow,
> And as they first are fashioned, always grow,"

he felt that their mental and moral character were to be shaped with an equal reference to their own well-being, and to that of society. He was wont to ascribe much of the regularity and sobriety of New England habits to the excellent domestic discipline of past generations, and much of the declension in morals observable in many communities, to a growing laxness in family government. The following remarks on this subject are from a letter to Mrs. Porter. "This morning I took the steam-boat at half past 6 o'clock. The passengers are decorous, sober people in their manners, excepting one prating old man, whose only defect is want of sense. The contrast between these people and those of the —— boat is inconceivable to one who has not seen the thing in reality. If I were to analyze this very striking exhibition of character, I should say the difference must be owing to causes, radical and permanent in their operation. The simplicity and decency of manners which I have witnessed this morning,

is to be ascribed at once to the early habits of those venerable men, who peopled Massachusetts and Connecticut. The vital impulse of the principles, which have been diffused and perpetuated in such happy results, consists in their being *Christian* principles. These ancestors have indeed many degenerate sons, who are depraved in a high degree; and when exempt from the restraints of home, are grossly insensible to duty, to shame, and decency. But the early discipline of the family, the school, and the sanctuary enjoyed in New England, gives a moral character to its population, as different from that of some other parts of our country, as light is from darkness.

"In several other respects this journey has strengthened the grateful recollection, which I hope always to cherish, of the obligations I am under to the restraints and examples of my excellent parents. I have a thousand times seen the life of a man rendered a scene of perplexity and vexation, through habits formed by the false tenderness of parents, and extending their influence to the whole character afterwards, so that the miserable subject has looked for a conformity to his feelings and whims from all around him, and even from the arrangements of Providence. A young gentleman, my fellow traveller last week, in the inflammatory stage of a cold, ate immoderately of solid food, with a dessert of pies, &c., and after it gave him a fever, complained grievously of his bad dinner. The same sort of men are querulous in all circumstances. The driver is blamed for the dust he makes. His pace is too slow or too rapid. The breakfast is too late or too early. The beef is too much or too little roasted. The road is too level or too hilly. The habits of a people are all wrong if they differ however much for the better, from those to which the man has been accustomed: and a city is an ugly place, if its appearance is in any sort, otherwise than he expected. It is a pity that a transient inhabitant

of this world, should be all his life at war with its elements, and its accommodations, because he was not taught a few lessons of submission and self-denial in childhood."

Entertaining these views, Dr. Porter aimed in his instructions to children in his family, as to children in his parish, to train them to early habits of self-control. In discipline he was mild, uniform, and inflexible. The reasonableness of his requirements was always obvious, and the child was taught that compliance was indispensable. He labored first to impress the child with a sense of moral obligation; next to train him to habits of sobriety, industry, and order. Though he employed occasionally direct personal address on the subject of religion, he resorted to it much less frequently in his family than many parents; a fact which was also observable in his intercourse with others. While his mode of government imposed restraint on all who were its subjects, it happily secured their confidence and affection. This was especially true of his domestics, his treatment of whom was uniformly mild and paternal. Each child in his house had his or her duty assigned with much particularity, and for its prompt and proper discharge was held responsible. In this matter he carried his principles so far as to designate the implements each individual should use, hoping thus to prevent unhappy collisions, and to inculcate due respect for the rights of others.

The following "paternal directions," written near the close of his life, for the use of one in whose welfare he felt a father's interest, exhibit his views of a parent's duty towards his son during a most important period of his life; contain counsels which it is devoutly to be wished might meet the eye and secure the attention of every youth, leaving the domestic circle for the untried scenes and temptations of a residence at college.

"1. Let no day pass without reading the Bible, and secret prayer: and if you have a pious room-mate, prayer in your room.

"2. Have a *stated time* daily for these devotional exercises.

"3. Never break a law of college, nor encourage any one to do it. To be sure of this *study* the laws.

"4. Join no *combination* to resist authority.

"5. Make conscience of it not to be marked on the monitor's bill—unless you are sick. Let me know how many such marks you have in a term.

"6. Next to your *devotions*, your primary care is to *get your lessons*. And as to the disposal of spare time for reading, ask Mr. ——— * what books and in what order.

"7. Exercise should be uniform as the sun; always *before* meals, if you can.

"8. Avoid night studies after 10 o'clock.

"9. If your health *requires* it, ask *good* medical advice.

"10. As to boarding place, purchase of books, and prudentials generally, take no steps without Mr. ———'s advice.

"11. I shall send no money beforehand, for your *regular* and *principal* expenses. The bills must come to me at vacations, that they may be paid at the beginning of each new term.

"12. As to minor expenses which must be paid at the time, keep an exact account to a cent, and bring it to me.

"13. Write to me whenever there is anything special. In other cases, write to me or some of the family, a journal letter or letters to be sent as you have conveyance.

* A gentleman whom Dr. Porter had requested to act as guardian for the individual to whom the directions were addressed.

"14. Take care of your *tongue*,—especially when excited be *silent*.

"15. Take care *what* and *to whom* you speak of others characters.

"16. Take care of your *temper*.—When *excited* stop ..... think ..... think ..... after a day or a week act, not sooner.

"If you would have your class-mates love you, *love them:* be benevolent. Be modest, kind, gentle. You cannot *force* esteem; you must *win* it. To do this, you must *deserve* it, and then in the end you will *have* it."

As specimens of his paternal instructions given from time to time, extracts from three or four of his letters to the same individual, are subjoined.

"Dear D———,

"The admission of our new class occupies all my time, but I cannot fail by Mr. ——— to write you a line. You know that my first desire is that you take care of your heart, and aim daily to grow in piety. My next desire is that you get every lesson well, and do every duty as a member of college in the best manner. For this purpose be *steady*, and *quiet* in every thing. Be in *season* in every thing. Guard against impatience and impetuosity. When you feel anxious to do something *now*, acquire the habit of thinking twice before you do it; especially if you get the least intimation from one whose judgment you should respect, that it is a doubtful thing. You must learn to wait and be quiet about trifling affairs.

"Your first duty is to be a humble growing Christian,—next a *good* scholar, not a *middling* one,—next a good subject of college rules, not a radical. I trust you will keep such health as not to leave A. in term time. I have not said to you ever, what I should have said to you

before, shun *social avocations*, that may interfere with study; and beware of premature female attachments. *Sat verbum.*"

"Dear D———,

"In general I shall answer your letters when they require an answer, soon after their receipt. But so pressed as I am with engagements, you will often have my answer only in the general shape of a letter from some one of the family. I am well aware that you have good reasons to be contented and happy, and I am especially glad to learn that you *are so*. Happiness, however, arises in all cases, not so much from circumstances as from the state of the mind; and you may settle it as a general principle, that just so far as you are unhappy in any case, something within calls for repentance and amendment. Your letters in the form of journal, may properly be quite particular, as to your means of spiritual cultivation, I mean your daily habits as to devotional reading, and seasons of secret prayer, —your studies, your exercise, what and when,—your diet, &c.:—as to your associates too, that is, what is useful and what hurtful in the influence of others on yourself.

"As to the care of your heart, it is a settled point, that a healthy state of mind depends on proper *means*, as well as health of body. If you were to eat nothing or poison, your body would be sickly. If you would keep your heart near to God, you must never allow irregularity and remissness in reading the Bible, Baxter, &c.—A stated season for this may as well be maintained as for meals; and hurry, or bustle of college engagements is no good excuse for neglecting either. Better indeed forego the meals than the devotional exercises. I am glad to see that you have some growing convictions of the great importance of watching the moral influences, which must bear upon your spiritual state in different circumstances.

"My next concern is for your *intellectual habits* and your *health.* The question whether you can go on at college, 'simplex duntaxat et unum' as a student, is the hinge of your whole hereafter. Your success in life requires that the habits of a solid, well informed man be settled now; and your safety even requires that a purpose coolly settled, should not be changed under the occurrence of circumstances that might readily be foreseen."

"Dear D———,

"We are glad to learn from your letters that your health is so good, and hope you will feel the obligation to be first of all thankful to your heavenly Benefactor, and next faithful in devoting to his glory all your time and talents, by aiming every day to gain useful knowledge, that you may be prepared to serve God. You may never reach the requisite age to enter into the ministry, to which I suppose you consider yourself consecrated by your own solemn purpose, if you shall live and be qualified for that sacred profession. Philip of Macedon kept a man in pay, only to repeat to him daily one sentence, 'Remember Philip that thou art mortal.'

"I hope you will never think of finding any excuse, (for no good one can be found,) for neglecting the regular duties of the closet, viz: self examination, reading the Bible, and some such book as Baxter's Saint's Rest, *daily.* I say *regular*, because all experience proves that, without regularity as to times, secret devotion amounts to nothing.

"I wish you to be, not penurious, but vigilant and economical as to expense. I say this rather to form your general habits aright; otherwise you could never be a *minister*, without endless trouble in secular affairs. Take care not to buy *any thing*, even a goose quill or pencil, that you can do *without.* At the same time, you must not

save a cent at the expense of character; where justice or settled usage, that is consistent with good conscience, constitute a fair claim on you; such as taxes for your customary classical expenses, or those of a society you have deliberately joined.

"Be discreet in talking about your expenses, or any other subject especially that is a subject of excitement. If you remove from Mrs. ———'s after this term, be at least a *month* in inquiring what will be your fare, your associates, expense, &c.

"Your standing at college ought to depend and will depend on your *daily recitations*, and daily punctuality and regularity in your duties as a student.

"I must commit you, dear D———, and the rest of the family to God, during my expected long absence. If I should never see you again, remember the counsels I have given you. Probably I may not soon write you another letter, and to write this I postpone other pressing duties."

Again he writes:—

"You know it is one of my practical maxims, 'What is worth doing, is worth doing well.' I wish I could answer all your inquiries fully, though in doing so, I should little more than repeat my '*line* upon *line*' counsels given you heretofore. I have watched the developments of your character, as you know, with solicitude. The rank of ultimate usefulness, to which you are destined, depends under Providence, on the patient, steady march with which you go on in the daily (*daily* I say) discipline of your mind, and acquisition of knowledge. Hence when you ask me, 'how can fixedness of purpose be obtained?' instead of a long answer, I say, if you 'watch and pray' daily—the next best remedy for constitutional vacillations of purpose, is to have a *grand, absorbing object ahead*, of

which you are not to lose sight any one day of your life. The work of each day is to drive *towards* that object, as a wise mariner does towards his port. One day he goes ahead rapidly, another moderately if wind and tide oppose him; but he goes ahead, instead of turning about because he meets difficulties. Amid the thousand cross currents that will assail you, hold the helm stiff, and go forward. While you determine (from love to Christ as I hope) to be a learned man, you must *study;* must study *patiently, daily.* Let all other cares and projects and day-dreams go to the winds. Do your day's work of study, each day, and ask no questions about hereafter. Take care of your *to-days*, and your *to-morrows* will take care of themselves. I will lose no time in guarding these hints against misconstruction, for I presume you will construe them according to common sense, and not as implying a rigid disregard of the future. But if I should live to see the time when you are ready to serve Christ, and he has nothing for you to do, I will take all back. I cannot think you mean any thing to your own purpose in saying, '——— was a dunce in college.' The inference is bad logic. Of one hundred college drones, ninety-nine are drones through life.

"As to my own plans for *hereafter*, I desire to *follow*, not to *lead* Providence. I would keep my eye *upward*, then *inward*, then *forward*. On my great journey, I have always been obliged to be content with seeing my path a little way ahead.

"Your affectionate father."

It probably will be difficult to designate an individual, whose example in the management of secular affairs may more safely be regarded as a model than that of Dr. Porter. He entangled not himself with the affairs of this life, but by prudent forecast kept his secular matters in

such train as effectually to guard against pecuniary embarrassment; to prevent the clamor of disappointed creditors, and thus avoid the reproach, which improvidence or want of punctuality in the Christian minister, infallibly brings on his sacred profession. Of his pecuniary concerns he rarely spoke even to his most intimate friends; the entire system, indeed, with which they were conducted, rendered them to himself a subject of but little thought or anxiety. Equity marked all his dealings with others. The maxim found no place in his code of morals, that "it is allowable to procure the performance of a service on *any* terms which are most favorable to our own interests." With him the interests of others were always to be consulted in connection with his own. No man whom he had occasion to employ, was asked to receive a remuneration less than justice would award. His scrupulousness, which in this respect was extreme, resulted as much perhaps, from an innate abhorrence of dishonesty, as from pious principle, and enlarged views of ministerial responsibility.

His expenditures which had reference to himself and his family, were confined within as narrow limits as a judicious economy would allow; yet when they had reference to Christ's kingdom, they were limited only by his ability, or by the exigencies of the case. Besides his usual contributions, which were always accounted liberal, he constituted himself by the payment of the requisite sums, a member for life of the American Education Society; the American Home Missionary Society; the American Bible Society; the American Tract Society; the Prison Discipline Society; the American Temperance Society; and several other benevolent associations of lesser note.

To Dartmouth College, when her alumni determined to raise such an accession to her funds as should exempt her from the pressure of pecuniary embarrassment, and

augment her means of usefulness, Dr. Porter cheerfully and liberally contributed.

In the Theological Seminary at Andover, he founded two scholarships of one thousand dollars each, designed to furnish a support for two indigent young men while acquiring their professional education.

To the Porter Rhetorical Society in the institution, he gave at its organization five hundred dollars, and afterwards added the copy-right of his Analysis of Rhetorical Delivery, the proceeds of which have exceeded, by several times, the amount of his original donation.

Several years before his death, he founded, by the payment of one thousand dollars, a permanent scholarship in the American Education Society.

In his Will he gave the following directions respecting his estate:—"Item. The other two thirds of my estate not otherwise disposed of in this instrument, I give and bequeath to the American Education Society, in sacred trust, to be applied for the purposes of that society, according to the provisions of its constitution.—Whatever shall be the amount of said bequest,* which shall actually accrue to said society, it shall be vested in productive funds, and divided into scholarships of one thousand dollars each, which scholarships shall be managed in all respects, according to the constitution and rules of the society, especially the rules respecting scholarships as at present established." The remainder of his estate, with the exception of a few small legacies, he directed, with the full approbation of his widow, should after her decease be paid in equal sums to the American Bible Society; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; the American Home Missionary Society; and the American Tract Society.

The amount of his donations for religious purposes

* It amounts to upwards of *fifteen thousand* dollars.

during his life, and at his decease, probably exceeds *thirty thousand dollars.* Though he realized considerable sums for his publications, the fact that he possessed the means of doing so much, with comparatively little aid from friends; with a moderate salary during his ministry; and subjected in after life to great expense by constant infirmity, is to be attributed chiefly to his happy tact in the management of his secular affairs; to the rigid economy by which his own expenditures and those of his family were uniformly regulated; and to the blessing of God on the determination which he early formed to devote his property after his decease to the cause of Christ.

In his apparel, his furniture, and his equipage, Dr. Porter was studiously plain, but at an equal remove from parsimony and extravagance. At his table, which was always frugally spread, his friends and the friends of the Redeemer met a uniform and cordial welcome. Here Christian kindness and simplicity presided, banishing the language of compliment and of apology. To apologies, indeed, in all common cases, he entertained a decided aversion. The following may be regarded as a fair specimen of his apologies at table, when he thought one imperiously demanded. A distinguished clergyman from a remote part of the country, was once unexpectedly present at his table, when, owing to the circumstances of the family, it was spread with unusual plainness. Serving his guest with such as was provided, he remarked, "Brother H——, we do not always have as plain a dinner as we have to-day." * The cordiality with which

* The *degree* of his aversion to a certain kind of semi-apologies in which some persons often indulge, is very apparent from the following ironical remarks in his hand-writing:—"When you are invited to a friend's table, take care to let him know once and again that you have *no appetite;* that you eat mechanically, not from inclination, but from a sense of duty. In this case, should it so happen that you eat as much again as another man, all the company will

he received, and the unaffected kindness with which he entertained his guests, rendered his house, especially after his removal to Andover, the chosen resort of a full proportion of the many friends of Zion who constantly resorted thither for the transaction of business, or temporarily to enjoy the intelligence and piety which are there concentrated. Towards the close of his life however, he found it impracticable, in consequence of declining strength, to discharge his official duties, and at the same time enjoy as extensively as he had done the society of his friends. In his deportment as the head of a family, and especially as a minister of Christ, while he aimed daily to exercise the other Christian and ministerial virtues, he exhibited a signal conformity to the inspired requisition, that 'a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God; not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.'

No delineation of Dr. Porter's social character can be more graphic than he has himself furnished in describing that of his friend.*—'His manners, equally remote from austerity and from levity, exhibited the man, simple, open, amiable. In moments of relaxation, his conversation was often facetious, but never frivolous; never unbecoming his sacred office, nor inconsistent with strict decorum. Though he was, for many years, in habits of intimacy with persons of the first respectability, he could with great ease accommodate himself to the circumstances of those,

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have practical demonstration that you eat from a high sense of duty. Another advantage of eating freely without appetite is, that having done so at one meal, you are sure of enjoying the same privilege at the next; and thus you acquire the habit of eating like a rational, sober man, and not like a mere animal, from the instinct of hunger.

"Take a dyspeptic stomach for your standard as to food, kinds, &c., and then measure by a shadow which varies or vanishes, while you are in the act of taking its dimensions."

* Rev. Asahel Hooker.

who were in the humblest walks of life. His whole deportment was a pattern of that better sort of politeness, which consists, not in a studied conformity to the usages of the fashionable world, but in *simplicity and godly sincerity*. He was free from that affected frankness, which makes a merit of uttering every rude and unseemly thought to others, and in the very act of doing a kindness, infallibly gives offence. Yet no man could tell another of his faults with greater fidelity or effect than he. The native benevolence of his heart, united with habitual delicacy of feeling, and sanctified by religious principle, qualified him to perform the most difficult duties, in the most unexceptionable manner."

CHAPTER XVII.

CONNECTION WITH BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.

Remarks—Monday evening meeting—Monthly concert—American Tract Society—Christian Sabbath—Letter to Gov. Treadwell—Monroe's tour—La Fayette's tour—American Education Society—Labors in its behalf—Letter to Tabernacle church—Letter to Mr. Cornelius—Mr. C.'s reply—Letter from Rev. Dr. Cogswell—American Home Missionary Society—Letter to Mr. E. Lord—Letter from Rev. Dr. Peters—Prison Discipline Society—Letter from Mr. E. Lord.

The most valuable if not the most interesting part of religious biography, is that which presents before us the Christian engaged in active exertion for the good of others. Here we have a display of that disinterested benevolence which characterizes seraphim and saints before the Throne. Here we are taught by living example, not only that we may, but *how* we may live "not unto ourselves." Even the brightest exhibition of the Christian graces in human beings, we know may be contemplated with indifference, by the heart which can peruse unmoved the history of Him, in whom dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" but to the man of pious sensibility, the exhibition is productive of invaluable benefit. It awakens remissness, chides indifference, deepens penitence and humility, and stimulates faith, and love, and holy zeal.

Such is the effect on the Christian, as he contemplates the disinterested, self-denying, and abundant labors of the apostles; or reads the story of the humblest disciple, who "according to that he hath," devotes his undivided energies to the same blessed work. Every period of the world has furnished opportunities for the development of pious benevolence in effort for the well-being of others; but no one, if we except the days of the apostles and their immediate successors, has furnished more favorable opportunities than the present age. Never, certainly, have so many immortal souls famishing in sin, called loudly for the bread of life; never have so ample means existed of answering this call; never so numerous facilities successfully to attack the arch-enemy, and to retain securely and permanently, every strong hold wrested from his dominion.

From Dr. Porter's settlement in the ministry, he was deeply interested in every movement which had a bearing on the interests of Zion. Much of the time while he resided in Washington, he held in his study a meeting on Monday evening of each week, attended by members of his church for the purpose of promoting their own growth in piety, and their usefulness to others. In ecclesiastical and benevolent convocations which he deemed it proper to attend, he was found laboring modestly yet decidedly, to correct whatever he saw amiss, to awaken slumbering zeal and energy, and guide them to the most efficient and salutary results. In 1810, he was elected a Trustee of the Connecticut Missionary Society. After his removal to Andover, his influence in promoting benevolent effort, in consequence of his uniformly delicate health, was for the most part silent and unobserved. Though he consented in a few cases, to serve as an executive officer of religious and philanthropic organizations, his agency was more frequently and more extensively exerted in personal inter-

course with the official organs of benevolent societies, in the social circle, and in the closet.

A year or two previous to his resignation of his pastoral charge, the movement was made by the friends of Zion in Massachusetts and Connecticut which resulted in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Though he bore no part in the formation of this society, it engaged at the outset his warmest affections. In his family, indeed, one of the pioneers of this cause had for months resided; there, had been nurtured the apostolic disinterestedness and devotion, which led him to decline without compromise the labors and enjoyments of an eligible parish in Connecticut, in obedience to what he deemed the call of God to the abodes of Paganism.*

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* Gordon Hall. The following letter was overlooked when Dr. Porter collected the other letters he had received from Mr. Hall for the use of his biographer. It will interest the reader, not only because it exhibits its author at a most important juncture, but because it contains several reminiscences of the incipient measures respecting Foreign Missions in this country, which ought to be preserved.

"*Andover, July* 7, 1810.

"Dear Sir,

"Believing from various circumstances that you have some wish to know where I am, and what I expect to do, I take the liberty to write you this letter. After the people in Woodbury had given me a call to settle with them, I took counsel of most of the clergy in that vicinity, all of whom with but one exception, thought it my duty to settle with that people. Though I highly venerated the counsel of these ministers, though all things attending the call were pleasing, yet such were my views of heathen missions, that I felt unwilling to relinquish that desirable object; nor have I found, either from the gospel, or from the comparative state of the heathen world, arguments sufficient to convince me that it is my duty thus to do. Feeling the subject to be solemn and important, and having concentrated all the counsel which I could obtain in that place, I resolved to take a journey and inquire of those, whom I knew to have turned their attention more particularly to the subject of missions, and who consequently would be more informed and better

Soon after Dr. Porter removed to Andover, a *Monday* evening meeting was established in his study, and attended by his colleagues and a few other friends of Zion, for the purpose of *devising ways and means of doing good*—a

able to judge on the subject. Accordingly I set out, and on my way attended the General Association at Ellington. While there my case was incidentally mentioned, and I hence had occasion to converse with a number of the clergy, most of whom avoided expressing any decided opinion. The next Monday I arrived at Andover. The next day S. J. Mills accompanied me to Dr. Griffin's. While in Connecticut he had by some means heard of my case, and no sooner was my name mentioned, than he entered freely and feelingly into the subject, saying:—'The world is waking from a sleep of ages.' After conversing a while Dr. Spring came in, and with deep interest began to plead the cause of the poor heathen. The forenoon being mostly spent, Dr. Griffin proposed that S. J. Mills and myself and two or three of the students who before had conversed with him on the subject of missions, should meet at his house at 2 o'clock, P. M., where we might expect to find all the professors and Dr. Spring; who would enter more minutely into the subject. Accordingly we were there at the time. The above mentioned gentlemen were present, and as Providence would have it, soon clergymen came in and increased the number to *thirteen*. Dr. Griffin mentioned the business, and the meeting opened with prayer. The occasion was solemn. Two questions were submitted by the young men. '1. Ought a heathen mission to be attempted by men in this country?' Without putting the question round, this was declared to be beyond all doubt. '2. Which is the most promising region, our own continent or Asia?' On this question they were not unanimous. The weight of counsel, however, was in favor of the latter. In the *third* place, we who contemplated the subject were severally questioned concerning the origin and progress of our feelings and views. Knowing my situation, they *fourthly* requested me to state my relation to Woodbury. This I did as fairly as I could. Then they were good enough to offer their Christian counsel. Says Mr. Stuart in accordance with almost all present, 'I should not dare to place any parish in Christendom, in competition with a heathen mission.' Said Dr. Griffin, in nearly the following words:—'Until three quarters of the settled ministers leave their parishes and go to the heathen, let no one discourage missionaries, but rather bid them God speed. This missionary spirit which appears in the college, [theological seminary,] above every thing else, stamps upon it the seal of Heaven.'

meeting to which may be traced several streams of Christian beneficence, which are conveying spiritual health and gladness to the nations. It would seem that by recommendation of this meeting, a concert of prayer, which

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"All present seemed highly gratified with what they heard and saw. Dr. Spring proposed that the next day the subject should be laid before the General Association. Accordingly it was, in nearly the same form, excepting my own case which was omitted. It excited a deep interest. The subject after some questions were asked was referred to a committee, who the next day reported that nine commissioners, five in this State, and four in Connecticut, be chosen, to meet as soon as convenient and consult on the subject. The commissioners are Dr. Spring, Dr. Lyman, Rev. Samuel Worcester, William Bartlet, Esq., Newburyport, Samuel H. Walley, Esq., Boston, Mass., Dr. Dwight, Gov. Treadwell, Gen. Huntington, New London, and Rev. Calvin Chapin, Conn.

"Things in this quarter favor a heathen mission beyond the most sanguine expectations. It can hardly be doubted that God is opening the way for the blessed gospel to go forth from these American churches, to distant and heathen lands where Jesus is not known. My prayer is that if agreeable to his will, God would employ me in this great and good work. By this time you will conclude that I have made up my mind with respect to a settlement in the ministry. I have. And I have sent the people in Woodbury a negative reply to their call. I have done this with the full approbation of my conscience. I cannot but wonder that I so long hesitated. It must have been through want of a contemplative and feeling sense of the preciousness of gospel grace, and the deplorable state of my poor heathen brethren. I have given up all expectation of settling in my own country, and if God will accept of me, I do consider my life as solemnly devoted to the heathen. You know, sir, from what you have heard me say, that this is not the impulse of a moment. I humbly trust that it is the result of long, habitual, prayerful reflection. I have joined the theological college, with a view of making some necessary preparations, and here obtaining that information on the subject of missions, which elsewhere cannot be so well obtained. I expect to see you in the course of ten or twelve weeks, as I must be at Woodbury about that time. I am anxious to know what effect my refusal will have upon that people. I could wish to be on the ground, that I might meet all the objections which may be brought against the propriety of my proceedings. I expect that my character will labor in that region which is so unfriendly to the

afterwards became the *monthly concert* as it now exists, was first observed in this country.* The facts are these: In 1814, when a convention of delegates from various parts of New England, was contemplated at Hartford, one of Dr. Porter's correspondents, Rev. Zephaniah Swift, thus alludes to that subject:—"The prospects of our country are darkening. The people have become so demoralized, and adhere so strongly to our corrupt administration, that it appears God must send judgments upon us. The proposed congress for New England affords the only gleam of light that appears in the midst of darkness, and this is an unhappy and alarming resort. Ought there not to be a concert of prayer among all Christians in New England for that congress. If help comes it must be from the Lord. It is hopeful that before our Treadwells and Strongs go into their graves, we may have something done for our relief." On the margin of this extract, Dr. Porter afterwards wrote:—"Mr. Swift's hint, from which came the present monthly concert." The expediency of a concert was discussed in the "Monday evening meeting," and the result was a determination to address

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subject of heathen missions. Jesus is king in Zion. God rules in righteousness, forever blessed be his name.

"If, sir, you would be at the trouble of writing to me in the course of two or three weeks, and mentioning the state of things in Woodbury, and expressing your view of my conduct, I should consider it as a very great kindness.

"I am your unworthy servant,

"Gordon Hall."

* The writer is aware that there may be difference of opinion in regard to the origin of the Monthly Concert in this country. But as the subject is one on which correct information is desirable, he cannot persuade himself to suppress the facts developed by an examination of Dr. Porter's correspondence. They are certainly of moment as historical facts, and should their insertion here serve to elicit fuller information on the subject, it will not be in vain.

a circular to ministers and others in various places, of which the following is a copy.

"*Andover, Nov.* 5, 1814.

"In times of such distress as now pervades our country, it becomes Christians to unite in humble and fervent supplication for help from above.

"As our civil rulers have proposed a convention of delegates from the New England States, it is important that the prayers of pious people should be offered up, that this convention may be so enlightened and guided, as to adopt the best means for the removal of our public calamities. It is proposed by Christians in different places to observe Thursday evening, between the hours of 7 and 8 o'clock of each week, until the 15th of December, when the convention is to assemble, as a season of special prayer in reference to this object, either in a social manner or in the closet, as circumstances may render it expedient; and that Dec. 15th be observed as a day of *fasting* and *prayer* in a social or private manner.

"I hope this proposal will meet your approbation, and that you will communicate the knowledge of it as speedily and extensively as possible, that there may be a general concert in the measure, among all serious people in New England."

To this circular, a copy of which Dr. Porter enclosed to Mr. Swift, he subjoined :—"The above is a copy of a circular agreed upon in our Monday evening meeting, in consequence of a hint contained in your last letter. 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.' Measures are put in operation to spread this thing over New England by means of pens and tongues, without the parade of printed notifications. I doubt not you will help it on."

Dr. Porter soon after received a letter from a distinguished clergyman now living, dated Litchfield, (Conn.) Dec. 12, 1814, from which the following is taken.

"My dear Brother,

"Yours giving an account of the proposed Concert was duly received and communicated to all in this region, and meets the approbation not only of the pious, but of some others who would not venture into a conference meeting to pray for their souls. We keep Thursday next as a day of prayer and fasting according to each person or family's discretion. But why, brother, should such a concert begin and end with the emergency which occasioned it? Brother S—— of New York, has written to me with some earnestness on the subject of a general Concert of Prayer in all the churches in the nation. Why cannot such a concert be established once a month? I believe the public mind is prepared for it, and that the providence of God demands special union of good people in supplication, not only for our wicked country, but for the revival of religion and the spread of the gospel. Make this one of your subjects of deliberation in your meetings to do good, and let me know what is the result. We may I should imagine, begin and extend the thing considerably very soon; and next spring and summer by means of ecclesiastical bodies, extend it over the Union and render it permanent. There certainly ought to be a general prayer-meeting in every church once a month, and this in all the churches might be on the same day."

About this time, it would seem, a general concert of prayer had become somewhat extensively a subject of interest, of correspondence and conversation among many of the friends of Zion, among whom the late Rev. Samuel Worcester, D. D., and Jeremiah Evarts, held a distin-

guished place. Of the result of the deliberations on this subject, Dr. Porter wrote to Mr. Swift, Jan. 17, 1815, as follows:—"The concert which began by a hint from you, is in a train to be made general and permanent. Only it is contemplated to carry it on to the first Monday evening of each month, which is now a season of prayer extensively among Christians in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Shall we join this concert of Christendom and help on the dawn of the millennium?" Dr. Porter received communications of a few weeks later date, from the authors of the letters above quoted, stating that the proposed *Monthly* Concert was established in their churches, and in others in the vicinity.

The compiler desirous of obtaining, if possible, authentic information respecting the origin of the Monthly Concert in this country, requested the Rev. Mr. Swift to communicate any facts in his possession relative to the subject; and in reply received the following:—

"As to the origin of the Monthly Concert of Prayer, I recollect that at one time when brother Porter and wife were here on a visit, Mrs. P. remarked that I was the 'first means or mover in establishing the Monthly Concert.' It struck me with surprise, for I did not remember that I could have had any particular agency in it. I think I replied to them, that I did not know how I could have been the first mover of that important meeting. I cannot now remember the explanation they gave, but have considered that so far as I had any instrumentality, it must have been in the following manner. In A. D. 1814, in consequence of our war with Great Britain, the prospects of our nation were exceedingly dark and alarming, not only to Christians but to the soundest and most discerning politicians in our country and particularly in New England. The war commenced in 1812, and was considered by many not

only unnecessary but very needless and wicked. The commerce of our country was destroyed by an embargo, a vast national debt was fast accumulating and the constitution of our nation, the charter of our liberties, was by many considered to be broken. At this time a convention of delegates from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, two counties in New Hampshire, and one in Vermont, were to assemble at Hartford, Dec. 15, 1814, to deliberate on the interests of the country and adopt measures if possible to rescue it from impending destruction. After notice was given of the appointed meeting of the convention, I wrote to brother Porter expressing my great concern for the safety of our country; that the salvation of it appeared to be connected with the meeting of the convention, and that if saved it would probably be in answer to the prayers of God's children. So far as I can remember, I suggested the importance of having a stated concert of prayer agreed upon and notified in reference to the state of the country and the meeting of the convention. I should think I stated that Andover, where was the only theological institution in New England, if not in our country, was the most suitable place for originating such a concert of prayer and circulating the notice of it through the nation. From this suggestion of establishing a concert of prayer for the salvation of our nation, I have supposed that brother Porter, in his more extensive wisdom and philanthropy greatly improved upon it and turned it into a concert of prayer not for the salvation of a nation, but for the spiritual salvation of the whole world. My impression is that the Monthly Concert of Prayer for the spread of the gospel and the conversion of the world commenced, in this country, at Andover, in the fall of 1814, by the agency of brother Porter, and that he was active and influential in spreading it over the country. Thus I consider the origin

of it can with far more propriety be ascribed to him than to myself."

In the preface to the "Proceedings of the first ten years of the American Tract Society," the history of its rise is thus related:—"The origin of the American Tract Society may be traced to a little meeting of half a dozen individuals, assembled to enjoy the advantages of Christian intercourse, and to consult upon the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. A circumstance in itself unimportant had suggested to one of them the thought, that a few choice tracts, printed in large editions, might be afforded to benevolent individuals in the neighborhood, at much less expense, than the little books which they were frequently purchasing for gratuitous distribution. The idea was suggested to his brethren, and excited so much interest as to be made the subject of conversation and serious reflection, which soon led to a proposition for forming a small *Tract Society* to put the design in execution. As the subject was contemplated, it grew in importance, and though perhaps no one at the time anticipated that the society they were about to form, would extend through the United States, yet it was seen that the subject demanded more mature consideration, and fervent prayer to the Father of mercies for his guidance and blessing."

The "little meeting" alluded to in this extract was the "Monday evening meeting;" the individual, Dr. Porter; and the "circumstance" the following:—He called one morning at a book-store in Andover, to purchase a few small books for distribution. He took up one and inquired the price, and was answered "*eight* cents." The thought occurred to him that books of that size might be printed for *three* cents, if benevolent individuals would unite to publish them in a cheap form and in large quantities. This thought, which awakened deep interest in his own

bosom, he communicated to his brethren, in the manner and with the results above stated. Several members of the meeting at once offered liberal pecuniary contributions, and engaged in prosecuting the plan suggested with a degree of Christian enterprise which speedily sought a more enlarged field of operations.*

The constitution adopted by this incipient society, was substantially the same which the following spring, (May, 1814,) was adopted at the formation of the New England Tract Society—an institution which in 1823 assumed the more comprehensive appellation of *American* Tract Society, and which in 1825 consented to assume the relation of an Auxiliary to a society of the same name, which was organized at New-York on a still more extended plan; and which fixed its seat of operations in that city, for the sake of enjoying greater facilities in effecting its benevolent designs.

There was no subject perhaps, in which those united in the "Monday evening meeting," felt a more affecting interest, than the disregard of the holy Sabbath which they were compelled to witness to some extent, and which

* It is true that associations for similar purposes had existed for many years in Great Britain, and for a considerable period, in other parts of Europe and in this country. The society in England for Promoting Christian Knowledge by means of religious books and tracts, was incorporated by the British Parliament as early as 1647. Previous to 1814, other Tract Societies to a limited extent, were formed by different denominations of Christians in Great Britain. Efforts had also been made, chiefly through the agency of Rev. Drs. Paterson, and Henderson, for the distribution of religious tracts in the northern countries of Europe. The first association in the United States for disseminating religious tracts and books, was the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, formed in 1803. Between this period and the institution of the American Tract Society, several associations on a limited scale were formed for kindred purposes in different places in New England and in New York.—*Proceedings of first ten years of American Tract Society.*

they knew was fearfully prevalent through our country. The temptations to this sin, which to irreligious men are always sufficiently numerous and powerful, were in both these respects greatly increased by the war between this country and Great Britain, which commenced in 1812; and their influence was scarcely diminished even after the termination of that contest. This circle of Christian brethren earnestly inquired, cannot something be done, to rescue the Sabbath from reproach, and to perpetuate its invaluable influence to our institutions and to religion?

The number and character of Dr. Porter's early sermons on the Sabbath, clearly indicate that from the commencement of his ministry, he viewed this subject with the liveliest interest, and with much frequency and power urged it on his people. He was among the first, if not the first, publicly to remonstrate against the law which requires the transmission and opening of the mail on the Sabbath, and to petition for its repeal. This enactment was passed in 1810. In 1811, the subjoined paper in his hand writing, to which in connection with his own name, is affixed that of a distinguished clergyman still living, was addressed to His Excellency Gov. Treadwell, of Connecticut. On the copy of this paper which Dr. Porter retained, he inscribed this memorandum:—"*Written in* 1811.—*The first movement of the kind in the United States.*"

"Sir,

"You will excuse the freedom with which we address you on a subject, which we know lies near your heart. We have seen with grief and solicitude, that disregard of the Lord's day, which has for some years been increasing in our country, with a steady progress. We have seen the profanation of this sacred day, not only by the post-offices and mails, but by the first officers of our government, and by our National Legislature. We tremble for our country,

that an institution of Heaven as old as creation, should be thus trampled upon by those who ought to be guardians of the public welfare, and examples of public morals. The Christian Sabbath alone is unquestionably a greater bulwark against vice, and a better shield to the vital interests of community, than the best system of penal statutes that can be framed. While the obligations of the Sabbath are recognized in the laws of this State and many other of the United States, we fear that the gradual and systematic encroachments which are made upon it, even by men in high station, will become habitual and incurable. We lament that while adequate provision is made against *petty crimes*, affecting individual interest, practices which tend to the prostration of all moral principles, should find a refuge in that very depravity from which they spring. The man who *steals* a *shilling* is consigned to infamy, while he who breaks the Sabbath suffers no abatement of reputation as a gentleman or a statesman. To such causes we attribute the miseries which have overtaken the nations of continental Europe. To similar causes we attribute the calamities which are felt and feared in this nation. If the Sabbath must fall, 'it will fall like a strong man; it will pull down the pillars of government, and bury our country in the ruins.' With these impressions, the minister's meeting in this vicinity have appointed us a committee, to enter upon some preparatory steps, relative to this subject.

"We think that good men have been held in awe too long by the jealousies and recriminations of political parties. It is time that they should wake up, and *look* at the flood of licentiousness which is sweeping away the institutions of Christianity, and the landmarks of our fathers. It is high time that they who have wept in secret places for these growing impieties, should speak out, with the courage of men and Christians; and should unite in a

firm and honest effort to strengthen the things that remain, and that are ready to die.

"The object of this letter, Sir, is to ask the aid of your wisdom and your pen in this business. We want a memorial to Congress that shall be the result of sound deliberation, and shall combine the momentous considerations that belong to the subject, couched in the language of deep conviction and feeling. We beg that you will favor us with the draught of such an instrument. Our plan is to carry this subject from the South Consociation of Litchfield county to General Association: and should it meet the countenance of that body, to the correspondent ecclesiastical bodies of New England and the Presbyterian church. We doubt not that at least the whole clergy of the country, will be united in this thing. On every branch of the subject, especially the *mails*, we wish to weigh our words well. Should such a paper be treated with contempt by the government, still it can hardly fail to produce a salutary influence on community. At any rate, we shall know where we are.

"With sentiments of great respect,

"We are, Sir, cordially yours,

"Ebenezer Porter,

"Lyman Beecher."

Whether all the memorials to Congress on this subject, of which a considerable number were presented in 1811, originated from this "movement," is unknown to the writer. The same conviction of duty which induced Dr. Porter to engage in this work at this time, induced him with his characteristic decision and energy, to bear an active part in the measures of the multitude of all ranks in society, who in 1828–9, and succeeding years, uttered with united voice their remonstrance against the oppressive enactment, which in fact disfranchises a class of our

citizens, by compelling them to decline official trust under the post-office department, or to violate the law of God in discharging their duties. While he lent his name to swell the list of petitioners, he fearlessly uttered his sentiments in conversation, in the pulpit, and by the press.* His heart was especially pained by the disregard, and frequent open violation of the Sabbath by men, who, in high political stations, enjoyed the confidence of the community. The disastrous influence which such examples were known to have exerted, and which, if unreproved, they would continue to exert, drew from his pen the following strictures. The first paper was written during the tour of President Monroe through the Middle and Northern States, in the summer of 1817; but was not published until subsequent violations of the Sabbath during the visit of Lafayette to this country, furnished a new call for its publication. The circumstances attending the preparation and publication of the latter are sufficiently explained by itself. Both these papers, as illustrating their author's character, ought in this connection, to be presented to the reader.

"PRESIDENT'S TOUR.

"The writer of this article professes to be a sober man, influenced by principles as remote from the narrowness of religious bigotry, as from the pertinacity of political prejudice. That the chief magistrate of the United States should propose to make himself personally acquainted with different parts of the extensive country over which he is called to preside, was so manifestly proper, that from the moment the design was known it met with universal approbation. That he has thus far on his excursion, received the most respectful civilities from all classes of

* See note F. to the last Sermons he published, entitled, "The Duty of Praying for Rulers."

our citizens, is doubtless a source of real satisfaction to every patriotic and philanthropic heart.

"To men of sound reflection who have witnessed the baleful ravages of party spirit, while, for the last twenty years, it has spread like a conflagration over the land, there is a charm even in the faintest hope that they may see a termination to the prevalence of these hateful passions. The spirit of conciliation, therefore, which has been recently manifested, is hailed by thousands as denoting the commencement of a more auspicious day. In a conjuncture of so much interest and delicacy, every good man must wish to abstain from uttering sentiments that may mar the joy of such anticipations, or, by any possibility awaken the frenzy of past times. Still there are considerations appertaining to this subject, which must have attracted public observation, and which in this free country, one might hope, may be made the topic of candid animadversion, without danger of exciting in any bosom, the rancor of party animosity.

"To speak plainly then, thousands of our best citizens, who were anticipating the most salutary results from the President's journey, were disappointed, and grieved, and surprised, that the chief magistrate of a Christian people should have commenced this journey on the *Christian Sabbath*. A Baltimore paper of MONDAY, June 2d, contained the following notice:—'The President of the United States arrived in town yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock, escorted by a troop of horse, the first Baltimore Huzzars, commanded by Capt. Sterret, accompanied by about two hundred citizens on horseback. After dining, he attended divine service at the Rev. Dr. Inglis's Presbyterian church.'

"I should be predisposed to admit almost any thing in the form of evidence that there was some special and adequate reason for this occurrence. But as no such reason

has been suggested,* and as this was the day on which the President left his family, apparently without any extraordinary stress of circumstances, the conclusion seems almost unavoidable that no such reason did exist. At any rate this will be the conclusion of the public.

"Now every plain man, who thinks for himself, will say, if it was proper for the chief magistrate of the United States, without special reasons, to devote one half of the Sabbath to travelling, and receiving military honors, it must have been equally proper to devote the whole day to the same objects: and if proper for him, beyond a doubt, it must be equally proper for every subordinate magistrate and every citizen of the country to spend this sacred day in amusement, or in secular pursuits. In other words, it must be proper that the institution of public, divine worship should utterly cease in the land, or be made subordinate to the convenience or caprice of its inhabitants. In one or two other instances, the statements of the newspapers respecting the President's tour seem to imply in him a want of strict regard to the sanctity of the Sabbath. These statements however, are so general, and so liable to have been more or less founded in mistake, that they cannot deserve a separate mention in these remarks.

"If the obligations of the Sabbath were not enforced by Divine authority, it must be presumed that the good sense and urbanity of Mr. Munroe, would preserve him from any *designed* outrage on the feelings of those who view the Sabbath as a sacred day. But he has a right to know that the conscientious Christians of the land, generally regard the obligations of the Sabbath as resulting not from human opinion or usage, but from divine authority; and that in New England, (for of this the writer can speak with the confidence of personal knowledge,) the

* That the commencement of this journey had been unexpectedly delayed, is clearly not a reason worthy to be named in this case.

best citizens look with deep solicitude at the consequences which may result from incorrect example, on a subject so momentous, and from an individual of so commanding influence as the President of the United States. He has a right to know that by the great body of respectable men, in this community, our Christian institutions are considered as the most precious inheritance derived from our ancestors; and that whatever of order, of sobriety, of industry, and of social happiness has attracted his approbation in passing through our towns and villages, it is to be ascribed pre-eminently to the influence of these institutions.

"So deeply is this sentiment inwrought into the habits and hearts of thousands, and those too the most intelligent and worthy inhabitants of New England, that it can never be effaced. We owe it to the memory of our fathers, we owe it to the spirit of high independence, which we profess to have inherited as their descendants, we owe it to our principles as freemen and citizens of a Christian community, to cherish this sentiment, and to declare it, with mildness and decency indeed, but with unhesitating firmness.

"Under impressions like these, one of the most respectable men in Massachusetts, when requested to act on a committee of arrangements to receive the President, gave this reluctant but decisive reply:—'I must be excused from publicly honoring a man, who publicly dishonors his Maker.'

"Had our editors seen fit to be less minute in their details, the writer of these remarks had been spared the pain which the task has inflicted on his own bosom. But the facts alluded to have been published, so as to have their influence on every family in the land. They must be known in Europe. They must be known to posterity. It ought to be known, then, in justice to the character of this great and growing country, that it contains multitudes,

who, in this one respect, can neither imitate nor approve the example of their President. Mr. Munroe commences his official duties under circumstances, which perhaps, give him the opportunity of becoming a greater benefactor to his country, than any man has been, with the single exception of WASHINGTON. But one thing is certain; if he is destined to attain this exalted character, he will not be indifferent to the obligations of religion; nor regard with fastidiousness, should his eye chance to meet these remarks, the honest suggestions of one who devoutly wishes that every personal and public blessing may attend him in his administration."

"LAFAYETTE'S TOUR.

"Messrs. Editors,—As the paper which I sent you on the tour of President Monroe, has appeared in the Telegraph, I submit to your disposal some remarks on the violations of the Christian Sabbath, as connected with the tour of Gen. Lafayette. On this subject I am especially anxious not to be misunderstood, nor to seem for a moment to have forgotten what is due to those delicate sensibilities, that are associated with this honored name, in every bosom not a stranger to generous emotions. In the history of this age, it will be an instructive and splendid chapter that shall record the visit of this illustrious benefactor to our country, after an absence of almost half a century; the echo of spontaneous joy from every corner of the land, on his reaching our shores; and the gladness with which grateful thousands pressed upon his steps wherever he went, to greet him with their welcome. Any man, ambitious of fame, might well be satisfied with the honors paid to Lafayette. The thing speaks for itself. It is not the homage of constraint; not the momentary acclamation that prosperous guilt and worthlessness may sometimes extort from the multitude. It is a burst of public senti-

ment; a sober, manly joy, flowing from the hearts of freemen; an example, in all the circumstances of the case, without a parallel in the annals of time. It speaks a language which will not fail to be understood in Europe, and to be remembered by the coming generations of the world.

"But there are not a few that have felt in its full measure this rapture of national feeling, who nevertheless regret, most deeply regret, that these deserved honors to Lafayette, should have been *made the occasion of violating one of the most sacred institutions of religion.*

"The New England Palladium of August 31, contains an account, taken from the newspapers of New London and Norwich, of the General's hasty passage through that part of Connecticut, on his way to Boston. The details of this account I pass over, extracting only a few sentences.

"'On Sunday morning the General left Saybrook, and having taken breakfast under the hospitable roof of Richard M'Curdy, Esq. in Lyme, he proceeded on his way to New London; and being met by the committee and a few citizens in Waterford, he was escorted to the mansion of Judge Perkins, where, with the spontaneous acclamations of a great body of citizens, and with heartfelt gratulations, he was received under a national salute of 24 guns, from Fort Trumbull.'

"Then follows an account of invitations to the General, from Norwich and Stonington, to visit those towns; introduction to citizens; attendance on public worship, at the church of Mr. McEwen and of Mr. Judd, both, it would seem from the statement, during the morning service; calls on several families; salutations of ladies and gentlemen received at his quarters; and, after dinner, a public escort attended him to Norwich. His arrival at the latter place in the afternoon, was announced, as at New London, by a *salute of cannon,* and so was his departure in the evening, and also by ringing of bells. The intermediate time was filled up with the same demonstrations of

eager curiosity, which have been manifested by the immense crowds assembled in other places, wherever the General was expected to pass.

"On reading the foregoing statement, my heart sunk within me, and I exclaimed—Is it possible that this is Connecticut, where for two centuries the Sabbath has been regarded as a sacred day! I read the statement again, and in spite of my incredulity, it was so;—these things did really occur on the Sabbath. But this is not all. The same number of the Palladium mentioned above, contains the following statement respecting the Sabbath spent by the General in Boston. It is thought unnecessary to refer to more recent occurrences of the same sort.

"'On Sunday he attended divine worship at the meeting house in Brattle-street, in the forenoon; and in the afternoon visited President Adams, at Quincy, accompanied by His Excellency, and the Mayor. They were greeted by the citizens of Dorchester, Quincy, Milton, &c., on going and returning.'

"The splendid military review, it will also be remembered, which was holden on Monday, was appointed at so early an hour, by order of his Excellency, that not a few who were summoned for the occasion, were absolutely compelled either to disobey the order, or to consume the Sabbath in preparatory arrangements;—a fact, I suspect, which, in time of peace, is without a parallel in this Christian commonwealth.

"I am aware of all that can be said as to these transactions, respecting the urgency of circumstances, amounting to necessity; and I would reply to it all, in the single remark, that the authority of the Supreme Lawgiver cannot be superseded by a necessity of our own creating—a necessity so voluntary, and so *unnecessary*, that to admit the principle in morals, on which its claims must be predicated in the present case, would sweep away not the Sabbath only, but the whole decalogue.

"Is no apology then to be admitted, in regard to transactions in which many respectable individuals have been concerned? As to the beloved and venerated Lafayette, several things certainly should be considered. First, his habits have been formed in a Catholic country, where no sanctity is attached to the Sabbath, except during the time of public worship. Secondly, that his former acquaintance with our religious institutions was short, and that, only as a military officer, in a time of war, and when the ordinary restraints of the Sabbath were often set aside by a real necessity. Thirdly, that, on his present visit to the United States, it was almost a matter of course, that he should give himself up by courtesy to the direction of friends, who tendered him every office of respect; and who, he had every reason to believe, were well acquainted with the institutions and usages of their own country.

"As to the gentlemen who are in this sense accountable for the General's arrangements, some apology too is to be admitted, as well as for the crowds of people who forgot the Sabbath, amid the enthusiasm of affection and curiosity to see this distinguished man. It was certainly desirable that his eastern tour should be finished with so much despatch as not to frustrate other engagements which he wished to fulfil. But when the excitement of the moment shall have passed away, who, that reflects at all, will say that such a consideration is important enough to be placed in competition with the moral and religious habits of a country? To repel an invasion, or to raise a siege, may require a military chief to travel night and day, to weather the storm, and to forego regular sleep and food. In the present case, however, there really seems to have been no adequate reason for such extremities. Indeed, from the effect which a few weeks have had in cooling my own ardor, I suspect that hereafter I may come to

question even the *sobriety* and *dignity* of these transactions, aside from higher considerations.

"But to satisfy you, Messrs. Editors, that my disquietude on this subject arises not from a querulous temper, but from what I deem important public principles, indulge me in some additional remarks.

"In our republic, with advantages which are unexampled in the history of nations, a great experiment is to be tried, in the face of the world, whether it is practicable or not, to maintain free institutions over a vast continent, by the force of public opinion. The possibility of success to this experiment, depends absolutely on the extent of intelligence, and the elevation of moral principle among the people. We congratulate ourselves on our emancipation from that alliance between the throne and hierarchy, which for ages held the noblest faculties of man in chains, and shrouded the world in night. But in the paroxysm of our exultation we are falling into another extreme; and both good men and bad seem to be uniting in the opinion, that religion and politics should have no connection. The religious man, doubtless, should stand aloof from the spirit of faction, and from the rancorous passions engendered by party politics. But he is a man, a moral agent, a citizen. Can he withdraw all the powers of his understanding, and the sensibilities of his heart, from the best interests of his country? With these interests, his own, and those of his family are identified. When it shall be shown that it is no concern of his, whether the rights of property, of personal safety, of conscience, shall be protected or sacrificed; then will it be a point of indifference to him, under what sort of government he shall live, and by what sort of men it shall be administered. Christianity can exist without protection, nay, in spite of opposition from any human government. The proof is seen in her triumphant march, amid the ruins of mighty empires that

leagued to oppose her progress. It is seen in the charter of the church, that places her safety under the guaranty of Omnipotence. But can *government* exist and prosper without *religion?* Look on the page of history and see. Communities that have tried the experiment, have perished in their folly, or been chastised into wisdom with a whip of scorpions. Should heaven, in its wrath, leave our own country to try the same experiment, we shall indeed travel the broad highway of nations, but shall find its every footstep marked with calamity and blood. It is the fashion of New England to glory in her profusion of blessings; but the source of all this prosperity (forgotten as it often is in our halls of legislation, and on our political anniversaries) lies in one fact—OUR ANCESTORS WERE CHRISTIANS. Wo to that generation, in which their institutions and principles shall become the scorn of their degenerate sons.

"*A state religion* is a deformity which I hope never to see in our Republic;—but I can never expect a state without religion to be prosperous, till I shall be satisfied that moral madness is political wisdom. The tendency, then, which has been apparent among us, within the last twenty years, to cast into the back ground the dependence of government on religion, and to except political men, as such, from the obligations of Christian principles, is the most ominous feature in the aspect of the times. If we shall continue to diverge, a few years more, from the maxims of our Puritan fathers, I fear it will be regarded as an offence against civil rights to say a word in favor of religion as a qualification in rulers; and that a fastidious party spirit will point the finger of reproach at him, who shall maintain the antiquated doctrine, that the best principle of political integrity is the fear of God.

"While the writer of this article has nothing to seek or to dread from the caprice of popular opinion, he hardly

dares to hope that his feeble remonstrance will avail any thing against a downward current which already seems to be overwhelming. Ten years ago, the people of this commonwealth, alarmed at the growing profanation of the Sabbath, were aroused to measures of energy in executing the laws against violators of this sacred day; and poured in petitions to the General Court, that these laws might be made more perfectly to meet the exigencies of the case. But our highest judicial tribunal set its foot on these last strugglings of attachment to habits sanctioned by the wisdom of two centuries; and since then, who can tell an instance, in which any Sabbath-breaker has been punished or molested, in Massachusetts? What drover, or waggoner, or traveller of any sort, does not pursue his journey, if he pleases, on the Sabbath? What inn-keeper or toll-gatherer, on our great roads, has any respite from his ordinary vocation on this day? The ship in full sail keeps on her way for a short distance after her canvass is taken in; but if the propelling power is not renewed, she moves slowly, then stops, and then is drifted backward by the tide. There are certain outrages on the Sabbath, which are still coerced by the influence of public habit, and which no man will commit, who wishes for the votes of his fellow-citizens, or even their good opinion. But should the future resemble the past in the progress of declension, who can undertake to say, that, within fifty years, the ploughman will not prosecute his labor on the Sabbath, and under the very windows of the sanctuary; and the voice of devotion be stifled by the clamorous revelry of the tavern and the shooting-match?

"These remarks, occasioned by those violations of the Sabbath connected with the tour of General Lafayette, have been thus extended, because every new example of this sort, from men of eminent respectability and influence, gives strength to the current that threatens to sweep

away our Christian institutions. It is time for reflecting men, especially for the official guardians of religion, to awake on this subject. It is time that, from our pulpits at least, not an occasional and faint admonition, but a note of remonstrance, loud, united and reiterated, should be heard. If our Bible and our statute-book recognize the Sabbath as a day of sacred rest from common business and recreations, let us decide whether we will regard it as such, or relinquish the name of a Christian people. If we will maintain before the world, that we are the most free and enlightened community on the globe, let us show that we have wisdom enough to understand, and freedom enough to assert, our own interests and rights in the most important of all concerns. On this subject, I confess that I have been put to shame by the manly independence with which British Christians rebuke the transgressions of nobility and majesty itself.

"When George IV. was Prince of Wales, the Bishop of London waited on him in person, to expostulate with him on the mischievous influence of his example, in attending a military dinner on the Sabbath. The Prince received the admonition very courteously, and gave orders that the entertainment should be changed to another day. After the Prince came to the throne, he nominated Dr. Pearson to be one of his chaplains, who very promptly declined the honor, saying, 'It would require me to violate my conscience, by attending your majesty's parties of pleasure on the Sabbath.' The king honored this Christian magnanimity with new testimonies of his favor.

"In a public journal of 1813, I find the same personage thus unceremoniously arraigned:—'Last Sunday, while I rested during a journey, at a large country town, the Prince Regent and his suite passed through the town in one direction, and a judge of the circuit in another; both travelling rapidly, and communicating abundant activity

to the inns and stable yards where they had occasion to stop. But this was not the only evil. Public curiosity was awake to see the Prince Regent. Instead of the crowded church, or the quiet family circle, all was bustle, and confusion, and clamor. The streets through which he had to pass, were filled with spectators; and the grave aspect of the Sabbath, was changed for the levity and frivolity of a fair or a race course.' The writer proceeds with a strain of dignified but severe animadversion on these facts. Now it looks something like a paradox, that the subject of a monarchy should be able to look his king in the face, and tell him his fault; and yet, among us republicans, where the highest officer is subject to law, and dependent on public opinion for his office, he may, in respect to our most sacred institutions, put at defiance law, and usage, and public opinion, on the presumption that every man in the community will have too much delicacy, and too much respect for a public officer, to speak of his fault, at least to speak of it aloud, and with decided disapprobation.

"Before I dismiss this subject, permit me to add, that, on the general tendency of remissness in observing the Sabbath, the views now expressed, so far from being original or peculiar, have been, for ages, the views of the wisest statesmen and jurists in Christendom. Judge Blackstone says:—'Besides the notorious indecency and scandal of permitting any secular business to be publicly transacted on that day, in a country professing Christianity, and the corruption of morals which usually follows its profanation; the keeping of one day in seven holy, as a time of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to *to a state, considered merely as a civil institution.* It humanizes the manners of the lower classes, which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit; it imprints on the

minds of the people that sense of their duty to God, so necessary to make them *good citizens*, but which yet would be worn out and defaced, without stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker.'

"The sentiments of WASHINGTON, as contained in his valedictory address, are so familiar, that I quote only a few sentences :—'Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion;—reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail, in exclusion of religious principle.' These remarks do not indeed refer expressly to the Sabbath; but that they are capable of such an application, may be seen from a single fact in the example of the same great and excellent man. The anecdote is one which was communicated to me, on what I supposed unquestionable authority. In the town of A——, in Connecticut, where the roads were extremely rough, Washington was overtaken by night on Saturday, not having been able to reach the village where he designed to rest on the Sabbath. Next morning, about sunrise, his coach was harnessed, and he was proceeding forward to an inn, near the place of worship which he proposed to attend. A plain man, who was an informing officer, came from a cottage, and inquired of the coachman, whether there was any urgent reason for his travelling on the Lord's day. The General, instead of resenting this as impertinent rudeness, ordered the coachman to stop, with great civility explained the circumstances to the officer, commended him for his fidelity, and assured him that nothing was farther from his intention, than to treat with disrespect the laws and usages of Connecticut relative to the Sabbath, which met his

most cordial approbation. How many admirers of Washington might receive instruction and reproof from his example! NEW ENGLANDER."

In 1828 the 'General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath' was organized, and fixed its centre of operations in the city of New York. In its formation Dr. Porter greatly rejoiced; and to its operations and influence looked forward with cheering expectations. In one of his letters to Lewis Tappan, Esq., the corresponding secretary of the Union, he writes:—

"There should be more general, continuous, systematic effort on the part of ministers, to *instruct* their hearers as to the perpetuity and moral obligation of the fourth commandment. Here we stand on firm and high ground, which we can maintain, and must maintain, or nothing is done. The *civil* bearings of the subject are all important too, but secondary. The *press*, as well as the pulpit, should speak ably, loudly, and often, on this momentous subject. The first talents of the church should be enlisted in discussing the most prominent parts of it, in our periodicals and newspapers; I do not say *religious* papers, but *all* papers into which such discussions will be admitted. Distinguished men, especially in cities, should combine their efforts to *persuade* stage and steamboat owners to respect the Lord's day; and make them feel that it is their *interest* to do so.

"More than all, the enterprise demands a *prime* man, *devoted* to it. Can it be that God intends to frustrate all measures to obtain such a man? I cannot believe it, because I cannot believe that he intends to leave this great country without a Sabbath.

"I wish much to be with you, but cannot. My heart is with you, if you *push forward.*

"Ever yours, &c."

A plan for promoting the observance of the Sabbath, which, towards the close of his life deeply interested Dr. Porter, was the formation of associations similar in principle to those which have so effectually checked the ravages of intemperance in our country. He desired to see the friends of the Sabbath *pledged* to abstain from its violation. This plan he was active in bringing before the Pastoral Association of Massachusetts, and was the chairman of a committee appointed by that body in May, 1831, to consider the subject, to devise some system of operations, and to report at a subsequent meeting. In behalf of the committee, he drew up the following statement and resolutions, which in pursuance of the object of their appointment, were submitted to the General Association, at its meeting in June following. These as amended and unanimously adopted by the Association, are inserted as the best expression that can be furnished the reader, of Dr. Porter's views on a subject which he considered of the highest importance.

"The committee of the Pastoral Association, appointed to consult with others, and to adopt such measures as they may deem expedient to promote the due observance of the Sabbath, have endeavored, with humble dependence on God, to enter upon the discharge of the duties assigned them. They have done this under the solemn conviction that for the last thirty, and especially for the last ten years, a gradual and growing indifference to the obligation of keeping the Sabbath has been coming in upon our community at large, and even upon our churches; and that unless good men speedily awake from this apathy, and unite in some efficient measures on the subject, it will be too late to arrest the tide of desolation, which threatens to sweep away all that remains of our invaluable institutions. With these impressions, the committee have inquired what

is to be done? Can we rely on petitions to Congress to reform the abuses of the national post-office? Greatly as such a reformation is needed, if attained, it would reach but one of the thousand forms in which the Sabbath is profaned: and the attainment of it is nearly hopeless, while as yet the necessary reformation is scarcely begun in our own families and neighborhoods. Can we rely on the influence of the General Sabbath Union? For three years, we have been looking with high hopes to that institution, so auspiciously begun, but it can never fulfil these hopes without a much more efficient co-operation, than has hitherto been given to it from any part of the country. In the mean time, the profanations of the Sabbath continue and increase, from week to week, while good men are imperceptibly carried downward by the current, and their slumber over the danger is becoming more profound.

"The committee believe, notwithstanding, that the spirit of our fathers has still hold enough on this community to redeem us from our backslidings, if proper measures for this purpose are taken, without more delay. And we think that the grand effort now demanded, should begin, where it ought to have begun long ago, in the *reformation of ourselves.*

"With these views, the committee propose that all the friends of the Sabbath, who are willing to do so, should organize themselves into local Sabbath Associations, by subscribing the following agreement, viz:—

"'Believing that all worldly business and travelling on the Christian Sabbath, except for purposes of piety, necessity, and mercy, and all worldly visiting and amusements on that day, are contrary to the divine will, and injurious to the social, civil, and religious interests of men; we, the subscribers, agree that we will abstain from any such violations of the Sabbath, and that we will use our

influence to persuade our own families and others to do the same.'

"The committee request the General Association to pass the following resolutions:—

"1. That we approve of the foregoing plan of agreement, and recommend to ministers and churches, throughout the commonwealth, to form local Sabbath Associations according to it.

"2. That we recommend to ministers in all our congregations to preach on this subject, on one or both of the two last Sabbaths in September, unless it shall have been done previously; and that within two weeks after this presentation of the subject, in each congregation there be an enrolment of names, under this general agreement, and a return of the result made by each minister to the General Agent.

"3. We recommend that a General Agent be procured, whose time shall be devoted, so long as may be necessary, to superintend and carry into full effect, the proposed organization over the State.

"All which is respectfully submitted.

"In behalf of the committee of Pastoral Association,

"E. Porter, *Chairman.*"

To the preceding statement and resolutions, the remarks which follow were appended:—

"To avoid an inconvenience arising from multiplication of officers and public meetings, the committee propose that each local association should append to the pledge above written a provision like the following:—'Should it be necessary hereafter for this Sabbath Association to meet for the transaction of any business, seasonable public notice of such meeting shall be given. In the mean time, —— —— are requested to act as our executive committee in promoting here and elsewhere the objects of this

association; and, until others shall be appointed in their stead, they are authorized to fill any vacancies that may occur, in their own number; and to adopt such measures as circumstances may require to accomplish the ends proposed.'

"The committee think too that each religious congregation should have a separate organization, and that (as in the temperance cause) friends of the Sabbath, male and female, of sufficient age to act intelligently, should be enrolled. The decided approbation, with which the above simple plan of measures has been regarded, by those who feel the deepest interest in the subject, is altogether gratifying and encouraging. And the committee confidently trust that it will be carried into prompt and spontaneous execution, in nearly all parts of the State, by the efforts of ministers in their own congregations. For the purpose, however, of correspondence, and of efficiency in these arrangements, a General Agent will probably be appointed for a short time, whose name will be publicly announced. In the mean time, should Sabbath Associations be formed speedily, as doubtless they will be in some places, returns may be made to the Editor, either of the Recorder or the Journal of Humanity."

The report of this committee, also prepared by Dr. Porter, and presented to the Pastoral Association in May, 1832, contained besides the documents above quoted, a statement of the labors, hopes, and disappointments of the committee during the year; of their efforts to secure the services of an efficient General Agent; of the temporary appointment of an individual to this station; and of the results of his agency. The report concludes with the following recommendations and postscript:—

"1. That a general effort be made to have a recognition of the Sabbath as a divine institution, inserted in the covenants of our churches, with a pledge to observe it

as such; the violation of which pledge shall be matter of discipline.

"2. That the pledge adopted last year be re-examined, and if necessary, amended;—and that a General Agent be sent through the State to see it executed.

"3. That a Sabbath Association be organized for the State, with proper officers, and with auxiliaries in each county and town.

"4. That this Sabbath Association have an anniversary in Boston, with a sermon or public addresses, and a general report, on the —— week in May.

"All which is respectfully submitted, in behalf of the committee.

"P. S. To this report, the committee will add one statement by way of encouragement to new efforts. No sooner was it known abroad, that the Sabbath cause was about to be taken up anew in Massachusetts, than the eyes of good men in sister States, were fixed on our movements with intense interest. Letters from a distance were addressed to your committee, either to express the most cordial approbation of our plan, or to obtain more ample information respecting it."

The measures recommended in the foregoing documents, Dr. Porter continued to regard as adapted above all others, to rescue the Sabbath from desecration, and secure its due observance. And while his consciousness remained, it was his heart's desire and prayer to God, that in humble dependence on Almighty power, they might be prosecuted with zeal and energy corresponding with the inestimably important ends they were designed to promote. Mrs. Porter remarks that she does not remember ever to have seen him so dejected on any other occasion, as once when he had just returned from a meeting in Boston, appointed to confer on this subject. "There is," said he, "such a lack of interest, so much coldness and indiffer-

ence, that I know not what will become of our country and of Zion!"

For many years Dr. Porter's thoughts had been much exercised in regard to the education of pious and indigent youth for the Christian ministry. A year or two previous to the formation of the American Education Society, he thus wrote:—"If the friends of the Redeemer were but properly awake to the duty of searching out indigent young men, of promising piety and genius to be educated for the ministry, doubtless many would be found, who would be an inestimable acquisition to the church. The public and systematic attention given to this subject within the last *ten years*, will form an era in the ecclesiastical concerns of this country. These noble and auspicious beginnings, it is devoutly to be hoped, will be followed up with efforts correspondent to the magnitude of the object, till every evangelical college in the country shall be furnished with a respectable fund, appropriated to this purpose. Most certainly, unless the solemn attention of Christians can be drawn to this object, and the united prayers and labors of the church can be directed to its accomplishment, the number of ministers must continue to be altogether inadequate to the demand for their labors. For the want of pious, orthodox, able preachers, many of our ancient and once respectable congregations will inevitably fall a prey to sectarian and heretical opinions; or sink into the darkness and licentiousness of heathenism. Still more deplorable is the condition of our new settlements. Amidst the wide spreading population of these extensive regions, churches are rapidly forming; but where can pastors be found to supply them? They look to the churches and seminaries in the older districts of the country, and cry, 'Send us Christian pastors: give us the bread of life.' Must we close our ears to this call: or instead of bread,

give them a stone or a serpent? Alas, '*the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.*'" With these views he was prepared cheerfully to co-operate with any association formed for this purpose, on judicious principles. He took an active part in the measures proposed for this end by the consociation, of which he was a member in Connecticut. He also constituted himself a life member of the Middlebury college Charitable Society, organized for this purpose, in 1813. He was prepared, especially, most cordially to unite in the formation of the American Education Society, and to sustain any responsibility in conducting its operations, which duty seemed to devolve upon him. Though he liberally aided by his influence and money, other modes of benevolent effort, this appeared his favorite object. His peculiar attachment to the Education Society, and his cheerful devotion of himself to its advancement, is to be attributed in part to the views above expressed, but more to the following considerations: first, that this society cannot, from its nature, be expected to awaken as lively an interest in all classes of the community, and call forth as liberal contributions as most other plans of Christian enterprize; and secondly, that the ultimate success of every other association for the moral improvement of our race, must depend on a ministry of elevated intellectual and moral qualifications, and sufficiently numerous to meet the wants of the world.

At the formation of the American Education Society, the deep interest in its object which Dr. Porter had previously manifested, together with other circumstances, threw upon him much labor and responsibility. In a letter to a friend in Connecticut, dated Feb. 12, 1816, he says: "For four or five weeks past, I have been taken up in addition to common business, with organizing our Education Society, the papers of which I send you. The whole of the last week, almost, I devoted to this in Boston, where

the directors met. Berkshire, Hampshire, and Hampden counties, in Massachusetts, were committed to me, and to avail myself of opportunities by gentlemen of the General Court, I with the help of friend T., made up nearly half a bushel of letters. Our funds are yet but about three thousand, but we have hardly begun." In a letter already quoted, under date of Jan. 30, 1818, we find these sentences: "We have undertaken to remodel our American Education Society, with a view to extensive operations in remote States, and circumstances have thrown the weight of this arduous business on my hands. This is the fourth week that I have been almost wholly devoted to it, and I have yet many letters and packages to make up for to-morrow." His labor and responsibility in conducting the operations of this society continued and increased, until the appointment of the Rev. Elias Cornelius to the secretaryship of the institution—an appointment which Dr. Porter urged, from a settled conviction of its importance to the interests of the society and the cause of Zion. As one of a committee appointed by the directors of the society, to address Mr. Cornelius's church on the subject of resigning their pastor for this service, Dr. Porter prepared the letter which follows.

"To the members of the Tabernacle Church, Salem.

"Dear Christian Brethren,

"It has become our duty, by direction of divine Providence, to address you on a subject deeply interesting to the kingdom of Christ. As members of the great community of Christians descended from the Puritans, and inheriting their principles, we know that you have been accustomed to cherish that spirit of expansive regard to the welfare of the church, which is the glory of this age. Actuated as we trust by the same principles, the directors of the American Education Society are endeavoring to

carry forward the great department of benevolent enterprize, which is specially confided to their hands. The period is auspicious. The friends of religion are awaking to a new system of efforts, for the purpose of augmenting the number of able and devoted ministers of the cross. God smiles on these efforts by various tokens of his special favor, and peculiarly by the gracious effusion of his Spirit on our churches and colleges. While the day of Zion's enlargement and glory is thus drawing on, we desire the honor and happiness of joining with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, in advancing the prosperity of his church.

"As the chief instrument of accomplishing that part of the momentous work which the American Education Society has undertaken, the directors of that society have fixed their choice upon your reverend and beloved pastor. In this measure we well know there is to a great extent a spontaneous concurrence of feeling in the Christian community. We were *called* indeed, to *make this choice* by the prevalence of such a sentiment among the most enlightened and pious men in various parts of New England, and beyond its bounds. We felt ourselves called to it by the voice of God, and the most sacred obligations of duty; and we hope, dear brethren, that the same sacred and powerful motive will induce you cheerfully to acquiesce in this measure, painful as we know it must be to your feelings.

"To you, who have had the best means of information; to you, who have given abundant proofs that you feel its importance, by the sacrifices you have made to promote it; we need not describe the magnitude of the object for which we ask you to make another great sacrifice. When you gave up a former beloved pastor for the sake of promoting the salvation of the heathen, you set an example to Christians, which is remembered with approbation by

the friends of Zion; which we doubt not is remembered in heaven; and which we trust has been and will be rewarded in rich blessings on yourselves and your children. It is then, with the confidence, and at the same time, with the sympathies of fraternal feeling, that we come, dear brethren, in the name of your Lord and ours, and ask you to part with your respected pastor, that he may devote the talents with which God has blessed him peculiarly for this work, to the momentous undertaking of raising up hundreds, and we hope thousands of ministers to preach the everlasting gospel. We ask you to make the sacrifice solely for the honor of your Redeemer, and in reliance on him for your reward. To your serious and devout consideration we commit this interesting subject. And may the spirit of the dying and risen Saviour guide you, and comfort your hearts with that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

"With sincere affection we are your brethren."

"*Aug.* 17, 1826."

The day following the receipt of this letter, Mr. Cornelius wrote:—"Your letter to the church is *just what I wanted it to be;* and, I must think, just what it should be. I have nothing to add, and nothing to take away. If I may speak my whole heart, it is a precious letter, and breathes a spirit which I hope I love to inhale also, and which I desire to cherish in my dying hour. I have full confidence that it will have a good effect on the church when it is read." In the conclusion of the letter from which the above is taken, Mr. Cornelius adds:—"I have not been insensible to the heavy load of cares with which the Education Society has long pressed you; and I have not been an indifferent or unsympathising spectator, though I myself may in some instances have increased those cares. But if you rightly interpret the present movements of

Providence, you may, I hope, console yourself with the prospect of ere long having that load in part, at least, taken off;—and though like a parent who has long anxiously toiled to support his child, you can never cease to care for its prosperity and to be deeply interested in its future progress and success, the immediate burden of providing for its wants will be removed."

In two or three instances when visiting the southern States for his health, Dr. Porter took a commission as agent of the society with the view of raising funds, or otherwise promoting its objects. At its meetings, especially the meetings of its board of directors, he was ever active and influential. One who was for several years associated with him on these occasions, has informed the writer that, owing to his deep interest, his liberal views, his prudence and forecast, his suggestions were rarely thought to need amendment. In preparing the constitution and rules of the society, his counsels exerted a controlling influence. Of the plan of scholarships adopted some years before his death, he ought doubtless to be considered the originator. One of his letters is in the hands of the compiler, which distinctly prescribes the plan of proceeding by which the establishment of the first permanent scholarships was attempted and accomplished. The proposal to remove the society's seat of operations from Boston to New York, was one in which he felt much interest. On this subject he wrote to Mr. Cornelius as follows in 1830, while returning from South Carolina.

"*Washington, Conn., June* 15, 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"Brother —— in New York told me he should see you, and would endeavor to call with you at my lodgings;

but I suppose you returned some other way. He also told me that a meeting of the directors of the American Education Society was to be held in Boston about the 20th, to receive propositions from the branch at New York relative to a removal of the seat of operations to that city; and that the day was fixed so late, in the expectation that I might be in Boston. The depression of health that I have sustained since commencing my movements northward, I hope is temporary, but it will delay my return home, beyond the day of that meeting.

"In this state of the case, I feel it to be my duty to give you my thoughts on the main question, wishing you to make all reasonable allowance for the limited views that I must take of it, having only a partial knowledge of the grounds on which the above measure may be urged.

"They who know me well, know that I have no narrow prejudices against Presbyterianism. It would give me no pain to see New England *en masse*, Presbyterian in one year. Nor need I make any protestations of *confidence* in the men who would have the management of the society's interests, if the seat of its operations were removed to New York.

"I can only hint at the reasons why I object to such a removal, but this I will do with no reserve.

"1. The *local advantages* of New York as the seat of operations in regard to Bibles, tracts, and home missions, do not apply to the Education Society. All facilities needed for this object from banks, or mails, or commercial guarantees, or transmission of packages and papers, may be had as well, or nearly as well in Boston as New York.

"2. New England was the mother of the society, and for fifteen years has been its faithful nurse. While I was best acquainted with its interior affairs, nineteen-twentieths I suppose of its funds were from New England. You can tell better how it is now. But I fear the analogy

of good old Jacob and Benjamin would not hold. If you take away this child, my apprehension is, not that the *mother*, but that the '*child will die.*'

"3. New England on many accounts, is the natural domicile of this society. Where are the academies and colleges, that are the oldest, the ablest, the cheapest, the safest for beneficiaries? Look,—and answer. Where are the churches that have been most blest with revivals, and have furnished most pious young men for home and foreign missions? God in his wrath may forsake these churches, and give them over to the blighting influence of theological speculations. But to act on the *presumption* of such a calamity, in our greatest movements, would be at least premature.

"4. New York has now as many *great things* on hand, as all its talent, and piety, and energy, great as they unquestionably are, can manage well. To superadd the Education and Foreign Missionary Societies, would be unreasonably to burden those excellent brethren.

"5. My heaviest objection arises from the present condition of the Presbyterian church. I know well the generous enlargement of soul that has been enlisted with us in New York. But that generosity has stubborn difficulties to contend with.

"Is it said, we would remove only the secretary, not the society? Answer. I object to any arrangement that would amount to a *virtual* removal, or a fatal embarrassment in operations.

"'But New York can and New England cannot support the secretary.' If we *cannot* and *do* not, I have nothing to say; only, let us give up the concern to better hands.

"Your brother,

"E. Porter."

In 1831, Dr. Porter felt that his augmented cares, and increasing infirmities, might render it his duty to resign his place as director of the Education Society. This conviction he thus intimated in a letter to Mr. Cornelius:—"I improve this opportunity of saying to you, what I have intended for some time to say, that I have doubts about remaining a director of the American Education Society. You need no assurance of my undiminished interest in the cause—an interest which will cleave to my heart to its last pulsation. But the machinery committed to our trust at Andover, is the greatest that God has put in operation on our globe. It demands our undivided labors. The seat of operations for the Education Society is now in Boston, and the question is whether a man there, young, and hardy, and less occupied than I am, could not help the board of directors in their great work better than myself. I have indeed studiously kept myself, for some time, free from every public engagement except this *one*, as being virtually *identical* with the main business of my life. And this one I can help, and must help, (at least in examining candidates, making out schedules, directing applicants for aid, &c.) whether I am a director or not. I suppose too, that ordinarily I might attend the quarterly meetings, except that in January. Think on this, and then tell me your thoughts.

"Affectionately yours."

In reply to the above, Dr. Porter received an expression of feeling clearly indicative of the estimation in which his services were held by Mr. Cornelius.—"I fully appreciate all your remarks upon the topic which you mention in your letter. But whoever else may feel it to be his duty to retire from the board of the American Education Society, I sincerely hope that you will not. So intimate, and I will add so *parental* is your knowledge of the

society, and of all its interests from the beginning of its operations till now, that your place cannot be supplied, even though you should be able to attend only occasionally. If there is a man to whom I have uniformly felt as though I could go, and tell all that is in my heart respecting the society or its interests, you, my dear sir, are that man; and I fear if you were now to resign, the child which you have so long watched, would have less of your fostering care and solicitude.

"With sincere, and I hope you will forgive me if I say, with filial affection and confidence, yours in the gospel,

"E. Cornelius."

We close the account of Dr. Porter's connection with the Education Society, with the following summary of his services, kindly furnished by the present corresponding secretary.

"*Rooms of the American Education Society.*

"Rev. and Dear Sir,

"In compliance with your request, I am happy to furnish you with some particulars respecting the services of the late Dr. Porter of Andover, in connection with the American Education Society. In this important institution, he took a lively interest from its commencement. He was prepared to do this, from the circumstance that, for some years, his mind had been particularly turned to the instruction of young men for the ministry. He was present, I think, at the first meeting which was held in reference to the formation of the society, and its records show, that he was one of a committee appointed to prepare and report a constitution to be adopted at an adjourned meeting. At the time of the organization of the society, he was elected one of its directors, and he continued to officiate in that capacity until his decease.

The society engrossed much of his affection, and occupied much of his time. He became even enthusiastic in carrying forward its plans and operations. Seldom did he fail to attend the stated meetings of the society and of the board of directors, when his health and duties would permit. Rarely was there a committee of importance appointed, of which he was not a member. His name appears on the book of records two hundred and forty-four times. In preparing the constitution of the society, and the rules of the directors, his accurate, judicious and well balanced mind was actively employed. Indeed, it may with propriety be said, that he was, almost exclusively, the framer of the excellent system of rules now in use. On all difficult or important subjects in relation to this institution, he was consulted and his opinion was ever highly estimated.

"The third annual report of the directors, which contains a great variety of valuable facts and instructions, was written by him. On the fifth anniversary of the society, he delivered a sermon, which bears the characteristic marks of his mind, and breathes the spirit which the Saviour manifested, when he enjoined upon his disciples, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'

"In the winter of 1816—17, Dr. Porter performed an agency for the society in the southern States which resulted in the collection of some thousands of dollars, and subsequently, whenever he visited the South, he exerted a happy influence on its behalf. In the last interview I had with him, which was only a short time before his death, some of his remarks were respecting the American Education Society. As he spoke, his countenance glowed with animation. With an emphasis which I shall never forget, he expressed himself to this effect. The Education Society must be sustained, for without the Christian ministry, little can be done for the conversion of this world

to Jesus Christ; but with it, by the blessing of God, every thing can be achieved. This society, therefore, must be viewed as fundamental—as lying at the foundation of every benevolent enterprise. And yet the community do not consider it in this light. Other societies, such as the Bible, Home and Foreign Missionary, Tract and Sabbath School Societies, are imposing in their operations. All they do is seen and felt; but the Education Society acts unseen. Its operations and results are known only to a few, and this, in a great measure, will ever be the case. The community, consequently, will never fully realize its vast importance, nor the extent of its influence, nor act in relation to it as the cause demands. Those, therefore, who can understand its operations and results, are bound to sustain it. It was, no doubt, in consequence of such views, that he gave to the institution, in 1826, one thousand dollars to establish a permanent scholarship, and, at his decease, more than fifteen thousand dollars as a bequest.

"Such were the sentiments and services of your venerable uncle in respect to the American Education Society, of whom more than of any other individual, it may truly be said, he was its founder, and its uniform and most liberal patron. And though he now rests from his labors, yet will his holy influence continue to operate on earth until that glorious period shall arrive, when great will be the company of those who publish the gospel of Christ.

"In closing this communication, permit me to express my high esteem of Dr. Porter as a man, a Christian, a minister, and a theological instructor. In each of these respects, he possessed uncommon excellence, and justly merited the love and admiration which he received from all who knew him. 'Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.'

"I am, dear sir, truly and affectionately yours,

"William Cogswell."

Dr. Porter's frequent journeys to the South had awakened in his bosom anxious solicitude respecting the deficiency of *well educated* ministers, which he was compelled to witness—a deficiency attributable in his view, in part to the want of a competent number of ministers of this character in our country; and in part to the want of adequate means of support. Impressed with this deficiency on his first visit to the southern States, in 1816—17, he felt the importance of devising some way of affording competent support to those who might be willing to enter that field of labor. To Mrs. Porter he wrote during this absence:—"I have endeavored to persuade the ladies of Savannah and Augusta to form missionary societies for *domestic* operations. Oh my heart aches for Georgia, and most of all, because Georgia's heart does not ache for itself." Having the subject thus providentially urged on his attention, he was prepared most cordially to welcome the first intimation respecting a national domestic missionary society. Under date of Feb. 4, 1825, he writes from Andover to Eleazer Lord, Esq. of New York, as follows.

"My dear Sir,

"Yours of Jan. 25th is just received, and though I have not a moment to devote to such a purpose, I cannot resist the inclination I have felt for several months to open my heart to you briefly respecting the great results which I hope may stand connected with your operations as a Domestic Missionary Society. The plan as first exhibited, and more fully developed in your reports, has seemed to promise much. What I wish is to see it become in name and in fact a great *national* institution. Suppose then you should invite, say next May, societies already formed for domestic missions, in different States, to send delegates to a meeting for consultation in New York. Suppose six

or more comply with the invitation; and your constitution should receive such modifications as may be necessary to make it a national society;—then let a Board be designated, with ample powers to compass the objects in view. Perhaps the State Societies already formed and others to be formed might be regarded as branches, and be independent in their local operations at home,—expecting to contribute surplus funds to a general treasury, for general measures—expecting also to unite in counsel once a year as to such measures, and to receive the general reports, which should embody a complete view of domestic missions for the whole country.

"The general advantage of such a combined operation would be to make our religious, more analagous to our political organization—'E pluribus unum.'

"1. The reports of such a society, operating on a grand scale, would have ten times as much power as those of any small society.

"2. The hearts of Christians would be expanded and gradually turned towards our *world* at the west, as an object of common interest.

"3. Under the impulse of so general an excitement, South Carolina, for example, would do as much again for its own missionary objects, and besides contribute handsomely (that is it might do so) to evangelize Illinois, and Missouri, and Louisiana.

"4. Such a society might have resources to furnish a permanent reliance for young preachers of proper character, but who are destitute of means to go on to the west, and who *cannot* go, and therefore will not in any snfficient number calculate on going, till a new system is adopted.

"5. Consistency, efficiency, and economy in missionary operations would be promoted. Small unconnected societies, without adequate information or means, without concert in measure, and without system even in their par-

tial movements, cannot do the great work that is to be done.

"These crude thoughts you will regard only as hints. I presume there has no class left us these ten years, in which there was not say six men who would cheerfully have gone out as a company of evangelists to the west, to cast in their lot together in transforming the wilderness, —had they been told by any strong society, 'Go, and we will help you till you can do without our aid.' There is at this moment no want of men in all respects competent to enlist in such an enterprise, if the door were not barred against them, by the absolute want of resources."

On the margin of the foregoing letter, Mr. Lord wrote when he transmitted it for the use of the compiler:—"The hints contained in this letter had an important influence on the measures which resulted in the organization of the American Home Missionary Society."

With the hope of obtaining a connected and authentic account of Dr. Porter's efforts in behalf of this object, the compiler addressed a note to the corresponding secretary of the Home Missionary Society, requesting the transmission of any facts which their records might furnish on the subject. His reply, which as a historical document will be permanently interesting to the friends of Christian benevolence, is subjoined.

"My dear Sir,

"The late Dr. Porter, of Andover, was undoubtedly one of the earliest movers of the measures which resulted in the formation of the American Home Missionary Society. I cannot say that the project *originated* with him. It is quite doubtful who first conceived the idea of such an institution to extend its benefits to all the destitute and needy in the United States and its territories. As early

as May, 1822, when the United Domestic Missionary Society was formed, in this city, an enlargement of plan, which would make the society national in its character, was suggested and talked of as a result to which the friends of domestic missions ought to aim. Some brethren in the western part of this State were perhaps equally early in their conceptions of the practicability and need of such an organization. I have heard also, incidentally, that, as early as 1824, a few students in the seminary at Andover, had their attention drawn especially to the wants our own country. *There*, Mills and others had been trained for the work of foreign missions, and these younger brethren were delighted with the increasing interest of the American churches in the condition of the heathen. But no adequate provision seemed to be made or contemplated for the supply of the destitute at home. They conferred together on the practicability of forming a Board of Domestic Missions, on a plan similar to that of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They had stated seasons of prayer for divine direction, and took counsel with the Professors, of whom Dr. Porter was one, as to their own duty. They were encouraged to expect such a result. A correspondence was opened with the Secretary of the United Domestic Missionary Society at New York. The result was that three of the young men before referred to were ordained at Boston, as evangelists, in September, 1825, and were sent forth, by the above society, as missionaries to the States of Illinois and Missouri. Dr. Porter was present at these solemnities in Boston, and was perhaps the first to suggest the discussion, at that time, of the expediency of forming a national Domestic Missionary Society. Several gentlemen accordingly, from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and South Carolina, were convened at the house of Dr. Wisner, where the first systematic measures were adopted,

which resulted in the formation of the American Home Missionary Society. Dr. Porter was chairman of the committee of correspondence appointed at that time; was also chairman of the preparatory meeting held in Boston in January, 1826, and was a member of the convention in New York, on the 6th of May following, when the society was formed. In all these measures he bore an active and conspicuous part, and no one, at that time, appeared to embrace, with more ardent zeal and larger expectations, the object to be attained.

"In view of this brief sketch, the origin of the American Home Missionary Society cannot be attributed to any one individual, but must be traced to a simultaneous influence which moved the hearts of numbers in different States, and prepared the way for the measures which were devised and prosecuted with so much vigor and success by Dr. Porter and others. His counsel was especially sought and highly valued by the executive committee in the early stages of their operations. There remain on the files of the society many of his brief and business-like letters in answer to inquiries from the secretary and others, in all of which there are many incidental expressions of the lively interest which he cherished in the cause. Under date of March 21st, 1826, he says, 'I hope from four to six of our senior class may be engaged for your society, provided they can be assured soon that they will be wanted.'—In another communication, dated the 28th of the same month, he remarks, in relation to the proposed convention in New York, to form a national society for Home Missions, 'no branch of the benevolent enterprises of the day has of late taken so strong a hold of my heart as the one in question.' In a letter of June 6, 1826, he says, 'After what you know of my opinions and feelings respecting the American Home Missionary Society, I need give you no assurances that I shall think it my honor and happiness

to promote its interests by all means in my power.' From a letter dated Jan. 25th, 1827, and addressed to the corresponding secretary, then in Boston, I make the following extract. 'If you could find *fifty* missionaries such as those on your list here, I should think it best to engage them at once, and then, in faith and hope, call for money. The churches will give largely, if they see large measures in hand and boldly undertaken. I wish your society could next fall have an *ordination* in Boston or New York, which would make a strong impression over the land. This I wished to see done before, but thought it best that the national society be first formed, and, if possible, from ten to twenty men ordained at once. Now is your time to secure men: you must come back and follow up the impression made last evening in conversation, &c. As it regards the getting of funds, at least in New England, you *may* do more in one hour employed in enlisting some of these prime men, than you can do in a month elsewhere. The committee of Home Missions in the seminary have a report ready, which is to be read Tuesday evening next. If you can come that day, I will then give you the particular information you desired in your note to Brother Woods, and also my own subscription to your society, which I failed of an opportunity to do, by not seeing you again while here.'

"It should be remembered that at the date of the communications from which the above remarks are taken, it was 'a day of small things' with the American Home Missionary Society. It had just begun its operations under its new and enlarged form. The experiment of its enterprise was yet to be tried, and its mighty work was all before it. Dr. Porter was one of the boldest, as well as most judicious and enlightened of its projectors, and his confidence in its rapid and enlarged success was in advance of most of his coadjutors in giving shape to its organization, and energy to the

beginning of its operations. To the day of his death he continued to be an interesting and deeply interested correspondent of the committee, and the counsel of no one was more highly valued. We deeply lament his loss, in common with the friends of all the benevolent institutions of the day. We knew him well and loved him much. Few men have risen up in our churches to so high an eminence, and yet remained so void of guile, so enlightened in their views, so expansive in their benevolence, so wise in counsel, so humble in spirit, so single hearted, steady and uniform in the great purpose of their life and labors. When such men die, the *church*, the *whole* church, has cause to mourn, for there are few left to fill their places. May the Lord of the harvest thrust forth many laborers like him, and spare them long to adorn the doctrines of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and extend the saving health of his gospel to the ends of the earth.

"With affectionate regard, I remain, dear Sir,

"Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

"Absalom Peters."

Of the Prison Discipline Society Dr. Porter was also an early and active friend. His agency in connection with this unpretending, but truly noble department of Christian philanthropy, is thus alluded to by the devoted and worthy secretary of the society, in the beautiful tribute to his memory, contained in the ninth annual report. "Before this society was formed, and even before its formation was distinctly contemplated, Dr. Porter, Mr. Evarts, and a venerable friend still living, signed the credentials of an individual, introducing him to the American Bible Society, as a suitable person to examine the prisons in the United States, for the purpose of ascertaining their condition. This society had its origin in that examination; and this is only one among many facts which might be mentioned,

to show how nearly connected is the name of Ebenezer Porter with the first movements in favor of a benevolent object. Notwithstanding his feeble health, and arduous official duties, it admits of a question, whether we have a friend among the living, who has done more for the cause of benevolence, by his spirit of counsel, and wisdom, and understanding; by his benevolence, and constancy, and truth; by his self-denial, perseverance and faith. On his bosom, feeble as it was, many a traveller in the service of Christ has rested his weary head, and many strong men, in hours of despondency, because their way seemed dark and gloomy, have gone to his immortal spirit, that dwelt in a tabernacle too feeble for its powerful action, and had their way made plain and light before them. There are hundreds, who know from their own experience, what this means. He was a beloved and honored father in the church."

The compiler cannot persuade himself to close this account of Dr. Porter's connection with the cause of benevolence, without presenting the following voluntary testimony from one who was honored with his confidence, and was often associated with him in Christian action.

"Dear Sir,

"I some days since received your letter, requesting any letters I might have from the late Rev. Dr. Porter, which might be of use in the preparation of a Memoir of that distinguished and excellent person.

"It would gratify me very much to assist in any manner, to illustrate the character and doings of one, whom I so highly esteemed, admired, and loved, whose heart, the abode of the best affections, was alive to every good work, and whose agency and influence were unceasingly employed in promoting all good objects, encouraging good

men, and devising plans of benevolent effort for every part of his native land and of the world.

"I regret however, that I am now able to lay my hand on a few only of the numerous letters with which I was favored by my lamented friend. Of those which I find I forward three, which seem to me most likely to be desirable to you. They do but partially exhibit the deep interest he took in home missions, education, and all our benevolent objects. Since my first intimacy with him in relation to these objects, and since my constant residence here, (constant with the exception of near two years that I was in Europe,) all our benevolent societies, and most of our theological and kindred institutions have been constituted; and I can bear witness that, in respect to most of them, his wisdom, zeal, and personal exertion and influence were beneficially and effectively employed. In the origin and in surmounting the early difficulties of some of the most important, his was the master spirit. By the maturity, superiority, and energy of his character, by the guilelessness of his spirit, the sweetness of his temper, the amiableness of his manners, and above all, by the stability of his religious principles, the constancy of his affections, and the steadiness and warmth of his piety, he inspired confidence, reconciled opinions, stimulated zeal, encouraged hope, and promoted faith, prayer, effort, and success. He was alike extensively known and beloved, and I trust that your Memoir of him will enlarge, and greatly prolong the influence of his inestimable character.

"I am Sir, very respectfully,

"Your ob't serv't,

"E. Lord."

CHAPTER XVIII.

PUBLICATIONS.

Sermons—Preacher's Manual—Analysis of Rhetorical Delivery—Rhetorical Reader—Lectures—Owen on Spiritual Mindedness—Do. on cxxx. Psalm—Miscellaneous writings.

During his ministry, and mostly after his removal to Andover, Dr. Porter published *sixteen* sermons, besides several in connection with his Lectures on Preaching. The former were chiefly occasional sermons, and were published at the request of those to whom they were addressed. Their titles are subjoined.

1. *Love to Christ*, from John xxi. 17. This discourse was incorporated into a volume of original sermons, published in 1808, and entitled the Columbian Preacher.

2. A Sermon from Matt. vi. 10—preached at Hartford, May 1810; at the request of the Trustees of the Connecticut Missionary Society.

3. *The Fatal Effects of Ardent Spirits*, from Isa. v. 11. This sermon was first preached in the winter of 1805, to the author's pastoral charge; and was occasioned by the death of a transient person in Washington, who was found frozen, with a bottle of spirits at his side. Though it was not given to the public till several years after it was written, it was, so far as was known to Dr. Porter, the first *sermon*

on the subject ever published in this country. Its appearance was joyfully greeted by many whose hearts were pained by the increasing desolations of intemperance. It was afterwards adopted as a tract, by the American Tract Society, and exerted an extensive influence in preparing the way for the reformation in the use of ardent spirits, which distinguishes the present generation.

4. *Great Effects result from Little Causes;* from James iii. 5. This sermon was also written at Washington; and its history happily illustrates the truth contained in its title. It originated as follows:—Dr. Porter had on a certain occasion made an engagement of some importance which he was expected to fulfil at a specified time, soon after dinner. A slight incident at the table delayed the meal a few moments, and thus deranged his plans, and disappointed the expectations of those he was to meet. As he rode towards the place of his appointment, the words were suggested to him, "how great a matter a little fire kindleth;" and at once the train of thought embraced in this sermon flashed upon his mind. This was Friday. He could find no time to write, however, till the afternoon of the day following. He then addressed himself to the execution of his plan, and by bed time, the discourse was completed. He valued it but little at the time, and first preached it as an address to the youth of his parish. He afterwards preached it in 1815, before the Moral Society of Andover, and at their urgent request, consented to its publication. This discourse somewhat abridged, was also adopted and published by the American Tract Society. Subsequently it was translated into French, and reprinted in France. When a copy of it in French was presented to Dr. Porter, he remarked with a smile, "that would never have been translated into French, if I had not omitted the allusions to Napoleon which it contained when it was first preached." An edition of this sermon was pub-

lished, as original, at Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1824, with many additions, and mutilations of its style and sentiments.

5. *The Magnitude of the Preacher's Work*, from 2 Cor. ii. 16. This discourse was preached at the ordination of Rev. Israel W. Putnam, and Rev. Alfred Mitchell, and published in 1815.

6. *Character of Nehemiah*, or *Jerusalem built up*, from Neh. ii. 17. This sermon was preached on the State Fast in 1816, in the chapel of the theological seminary.

7. Sermon from Psalm cxxvii. 1—preached in 1818, at the dedication of the chapel erected for the use of the seminary, by the munificence of William Bartlet, Esq.

8. Sermon from Hebrews v. 12—preached in 1819, at the ordination of Rev. Thomas J. Murdock.

9. Sermon from Mark xvi. 15—preached in Boston, October 1820, at the Anniversary of the American Education Society.

10. *Signs of the Times*, from Matthew xvi. 3—preached in the chapel of the seminary, on the Public Fast in 1823, and published by the Society of Inquiry in the institution.

11. *Unity of Ministerial Influence*, from 1 Cor. iii. 9—preached in Boston, May 1827, before the Pastoral Association of Massachusetts.

12. *The Duty of Christians to Pray for the Missionary Cause*, from Colossians iv. 3—preached in Boston, November 1827, before the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America.

13. *The Presumption of skeptical men, and careless contemners of Religion*, from 2 Peter iii. 4—preached November 1828, in the South Parish of Andover.

14. *The Immortality of God*, from Exodus iii. 14—published April 1829, in the American National Preacher.

15. *The Duty of Praying for Rulers*, from 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2—preached on the State Fast, April 1831, in the chapel of the seminary.

16. Sermon second, on the same subject. These sermons appeared both in a neat pamphlet form, and in the National Preacher.

Dr. Porter's sermons published in connection with his Lectures on Preaching, were designed chiefly to illustrate the principles there advanced. Contemplated as models, the selection does credit to his judgment. But aside from their merit as models, they are pervaded by a spirit of piety, which rendered them highly useful during the life of their author, and entitles them to a rank among his best compositions. They are five in number.

The first, from Matthew xxii. 37, 38, on *Love to God*, was introduced to illustrate the author's views of the proper structure of a *doctrinal* discourse.

The second, denominated *doctrino-practical*, is a continuation of the same subject.

The third, entitled *Foresight of Futurity*, from Jeremiah viii. 7, is denominated *ethical*.

The fourth, on *Religious Decision*, from Daniel vi. 10, is intended as a specimen of *historical* preaching.

The fifth, entitled *The Careless Sinner Warned*, from Isaiah i. 18, illustrates its author's views of the proper structure of a *hortatory* sermon.

Dr. Porter published several works, selected and original, which grew out of his official labors. Though there were books before the community designed to aid in the formation of ministerial character, there were none which discussed the great principles of preaching, in a manner and to an extent, adapted to the wants of his pupils. His duties, rendered more laborious and exhausting by bodily infirmity, forbade on his part the expectation of supplying the deficiency, from his own resources. With the hope of doing it in some measure, he resorted to a compilation which embodied those treatises on the subject whose precepts are most worthy of regard. This compi-

lation, entitled *The Young Preacher's Manual*, has passed through two editions. The second edition, enlarged by the addition of several notes, and by the substitution of Baxter's invaluable treatise the Reformed Pastor, for Brown's Address to Students in Divinity, was published in 1829.

In performing his professional labors, Dr. Porter had occasion to bestow much attention on the subject of Rhetorical Inflections. As it became his duty to investigate the current theories on the subject, he was convinced that the treatise of Walker, then used as a text-book in the seminary, in some of its principles needed correction; and that at least a more simple and intelligible classification of the main principles of the whole work, would greatly contribute to its usefulness. In the discharge of official duty he prepared a Lecture on *Vocal Inflections*, embracing those principles of Walker which he deemed most important, together with such modifications as he thought needful. This lecture, at the request of his pupils, was printed, in 1824, for *their* use; but contrary to the expectation of its author, found its way into some of our colleges and other literary institutions. Several requests soon followed from officers of these institutions and others engaged in giving instruction in elocution, that he would prepare a book embodying, in addition to the same principles, a sufficient number of examples for illustration. To these requests he yielded. The book, which was first published in 1827, he entitled, *Analysis of the Principles of Rhetorical Delivery, as applied in Reading and Speaking*. It was immediately adopted extensively as a text-book, and supplied as was anticipated, an important deficiency in the facilities for instruction in elocution. The estimation in which it was held, was unequivocally testified during the life of its author, by the rapid sale of several large editions.

So obvious was the utility of this work, that Dr. Porter was solicited to prepare a smaller work of the same character, adapted to the wants of academies and common schools. To this solicitation he also yielded; and in 1831 presented the public with his *Rhetorical Reader*. In preparing these works for the press, he felt that if he was temporarily deviating from the path of official duty, he was not turning aside from the great purpose to which his life was devoted. "I have been the more cheerful in this undertaking," he remarks, "from a full conviction that whatever is accomplished on this subject in classical schools, is clear gain to professional education for the pulpit. To no possible case, more than to this, is the maxim applicable, 'Prevention is easier than cure.' Faults which almost defy correction, might easily have been avoided by skill and pains in forming the early habits."

In pursuance of the same general purpose, Dr. Porter had commenced the preparation of a work, to be composed solely of selections from the Bible, with Rhetorical Notation so applied as to enable the reader to apply in perusing the Scriptures the principles developed in the preceding works. This work has since been completed and published under the superintendence of Mr. T. D. P. Stone.

The completion of his Lectures connected with the subject of preaching, was during the last years of Dr. Porter's life, more than any other, an object of his solicitude. He dared not hope, indeed, that he should be able fully to execute the plan he had formed. This, besides several additional lectures on the Characteristics of Sermons, would have embraced a much wider range of subjects;—as the *faults* most likely to occur in doctrinal sermons;—the characteristics of a good preacher, such as the influence of decided and elevated personal piety on his doctrinal sentiments, his motives, his personal enjoy-

ments, his fidelity and success;—the value of genius to a preacher, of acquired knowledge, of judgment and skill in the adaptation of his discourses;—his spiritual, intellectual, and professional habits; his closet, his study, his preparation for the pulpit;—originality and plagiarism;—preaching memoriter, extempore, and reading notes;—the advantages of expository discourses, and the best mode of conducting them. His desire in reference to the completion of his lectures was so far gratified, that he was permitted about three months before his decease to present to the public the volume entitled, *Lectures on Homiletics, Preaching, and Public Prayer.*

Probably few men in the same profession, differ from the author of these lectures in respect to the desirableness of a work of this character—a work embodying in something like a system, the great principles of preaching, which if accessible at all to the English student, are found chiefly in brief treatises borrowed from other languages, or in summary discussions in occasional sermons, or on the pages of our periodicals. Dr. Porter himself deeply regretted that he could not so nearly have executed his plans, that his work might merit the appellation of a system. But he did what he could; and in accomplishing so much, more than realized his own expectations. However deficient this work may appear when viewed as a system, it must be regarded, when we consider the embarrassments from ill health, under which the author was obliged to pursue his studies, a monument of his industry, correct taste, and professional ability. It bears the distinct impress of his intellectual and moral characteristics. For its perspicuity both in style and arrangement, for its candid and judicious criticism, for its logical and manly discussion, and for the amount of important information it embodies, it can hardly fail to be regarded as a standard work of the class to which it belongs, even though future

researches in the department, should furnish a system of instruction more fully adequate to the wants of the student of sacred eloquence. "The book," says a judicious review, "is in our judgment worth more to the student of sacred rhetoric, than all we have been able to find on the art of preaching in any language. It is refined gold, and ought to be studied not only by every candidate for the Christian ministry, but by every preacher who is neither too wise to learn, nor too old to improve. We may be somewhat partial to a book in which we recognize on every page the impress of a revered instructor; but after searching through libraries for something to guide us in the sacred and momentous work of preaching the gospel, we are constrained to regard these Lectures as the best treatise we have been able to find on the eloquence of the pulpit." *

Dr. Porter left in manuscript, brief courses of Lectures on Eloquence and Style, which have since been published. His discussion of these subjects was designedly adapted to the wants of candidates for the sacred office.

Near the close of his life he saw fit to offer the Christian community an abridgment of the excellent treatise of "Owen on Spiritual Mindedness." Of the manner in which this abridgment was executed the following extract of a letter to one of his colleagues, will inform the reader. "The savor of godliness in Owen is as great perhaps as in Baxter, but his rhetorical power as a writer is incomparably inferior. Indeed so languid is the style of Owen that he never will be read, in this day when religious compositions are coming to be tolerably free from the endless pleonasms of his time. Until I read Owen I never knew whence the tautologies and other defects in style of our great Edwards, were derived, and transmitted from him and Hopkins to our ministry, so as to become a general

* Am. Quart. Observer, April, 1834, p. 328.

characteristic of our theological writings, till within the last twenty years. I read the above work of Owen, I hope with benefit; but read with my pen in hand, blotting out from one word to half a page, as I go on. If on review it shall seem best, I may offer it as an abridgment for the benefit of others; the thoughts being rich and strong, as every thing of Owen's is."

A desire to secure a perusal for productions of so much excellence, and through them to draw attention to the writings of other distinguished divines who were cotemporary with Owen, induced Dr. Porter about a year after the publication of the preceding work, to offer an abridgment of the same author on the cxxx. Psalm. As in the former case the abridgment was made chiefly by omissions. "The reader," he remarks in his Preface, "will understand that in the following pages, he will find no other *sentiments* than those of Owen. These he will find also in the words of Owen, excepting that the process of blotting has often left a *part* of his words to represent the *whole;* and in a small proportion of sentences, the *change* of a word or two has been deemed indispensable."

Dr. Porter commenced a similar abridgment of Owen on Indwelling Sin, though he proceeded only a few pages.

Admitting the correctness of the principle on which these abridgments were made, it will readily be acknowledged that in preparing them Dr. Porter has rendered an essential service to the community. Few men certainly are better qualified for such an undertaking. To few could it be committed with more certainty that the mode of its accomplishment would do entire justice to an author. But the danger in admitting this principle lies in its extreme liability to abuse;—in the fact that men of a polemic turn, biased by party zeal, may be induced to pervert the sentiments of the great and the good for party purposes; or that mercenary and ambitious men, devoid of original

power, yet anxious to shine even in borrowed attire, may attempt to acquire distinction by clothing the thoughts of others in a garb of their own fitting. Though abridgments of several didactic and devotional treatises may be named, which have certainly contributed much to their usefulness, the writer ventures to suggest a doubt whether the extensive adoption of this principle, however salutary in hands like those of Dr. Porter, may not eventually be followed by consequences which the friends of vital godliness will deplore.

The *miscellaneous* compositions of Dr. Porter are not numerous. That they are so few is to be attributed to the fact that his frequent interruptions from disease, left him but little leisure for pursuits not directly connected with official duties. He never used his pen, indeed, merely for his own amusement, or for that of others. His miscellaneous productions were designed to correct existing evils, or to call attention to sentiments or measures which he deemed important to the best interests of the community, and were dictated by the ruling desire of his heart—the desire of being useful. Hence, did our limits allow, they might with propriety be inserted in his Memoir, as illustrative of character. The following are all, of any importance, with which the writer is acquainted.

We find his name in connection with those of two or three others affixed to a valuable Essay on the Moral and Religious Education of the Young; prepared and published by direction of the South Consociation of Litchfield county, Conn., while he resided at Washington. What part he bore in its preparation does not appear.

Soon after his removal to Andover, Dr. Porter wrote a biographical sketch of Rev. Asahel Hooker, who died April 19, 1813. Mr. Hooker was for several years the minister of Goshen, Conn., which charge he resigned on

account of ill health, and was afterward settled at Norwich in the same State. In preparing this Memoir, Dr. Porter delineated the character of a Christian friend, whom protracted and intimate acquaintance had shown to be possessed of uncommon excellence. The delineation, though brief, is interspersed with instructive remarks, and does equal credit to its subject and its author. It was intended to be published in connection with a volume of Sermons, but finally appeared in the Panoplist for February, March, and April, 1815.

Dr. Porter prepared the Third Annual Report of the American Education Society—a document which indicates extended and careful observation of the spiritual wants of our country and the world, and a deep sense of responsibility to supply those wants. It indicates no less clearly a familiar acquaintance with the structure and measures of the society; a distinct foresight of the objections it would meet, and the obstacles it would be called to encounter. Most of the society's Rules are also productions of his pen.

In the Quarterly Register and Journal of the American Education Society, for May, 1830, may be found an interesting paper from Dr. Porter's pen, entitled "Recollections of Gordon Hall."

About the same time, at the request of one of his medical friends, he published his views of the climate and the characteristics of St. Augustine as a residence for invalids.

During the years 1832–33, appeared Dr. Porter's *Letters on Revivals*. An association had been formed in the theological seminary, for the purpose of collecting and diffusing information on this subject. The object of the association, in whose formation and incipient measures he took a deep interest, and cordially lent his counsels and influence, was suggested by an obviously growing disposition in the religious community to employ means for promoting revivals, at best of questionable utility, and in

view of many intelligent and discerning Christians, of decidedly injurious tendency. It was proposed to frame a system of interrogatories touching the most important points in the history of revivals from the earliest periods of the church. These interrogatories were to be addressed to ministers in various parts of the country, whose pursuits or local circumstances might be supposed to qualify them to furnish authentic and instructive replies. It was hoped that in this way, errors in relation to revivals, into which the friends of piety have fallen in past ages, might be exposed; that admonitions and counsel might be given to the churches; and that thus the purity and frequency of these "times of refreshing" might be increased. The topic assigned to Dr. Porter was, *The Religious Revivals which prevailed about the beginning of the present century.* For the discussion of this he was peculiarly qualified, by his habits of accurate observation, and by personal acquaintance with many active agents, and with the measures employed in promoting these revivals. His attention, moreover, had been for some years directed to this subject; he had contemplated the comparative characteristics of these and more modern revivals; with deep solicitude had noted the comparative results; and he was prepared to speak the more frankly and decidedly by the conviction that the purity, and consequently the dearest interests of the church were in peril. He had previously urged some of his brethren in the ministry, whose circumstances he thought more favorable than his own, to the undertaking, to furnish the community with an account of these revivals; and several years before the appearance of these letters, he expressed to the writer his determination, as no one undertook the work, to perform it himself. The formation of the Revival Association in the seminary, furnished an opportunity for the expression of his views, which he felt himself bound to improve. These letters first appeared in the Spirit of the Pilgrims, and were

copied extensively into other religious periodicals through the country; exerting a happy influence in checking the growth and prevalence of the evils which had awakened his solicitude. In these letters, "being dead, he yet speaketh"—the language of warning against reliance on *means* to effect what God has declared is effected, not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit; of remonstrance against the substitution of human devices for the simple yet efficacious mode of securing the salvation of souls prescribed by the Holy Ghost.

At the request of the venerable Mr. Bartlet of Newburyport, when about to erect a monument to the memory of Whitefield, in the church in that place beneath which his remains are interred, Dr. Porter wrote the following *epitaph*, the insertion of which in this place may be gratifying to many readers, both from a regard to its subject and its author.

This Cenotaph
is erected, with affectionate veneration,
to the memory of
the Rev. George Whitefield,
born at Gloucester, Eng., Dec. 16, 1714;
educated at Oxford University; ordained 1736.
In a ministry of 34 years,
he crossed the Atlantic 13 times,
and preached more than 18,000 sermons.

As a soldier of the cross, humble, devout, ardent, he put on the whole armor of God, preferring the honor of Christ to his own interest, repose, reputation or life. As a Christian orator, his deep piety, disinterested zeal, and vivid imagination, gave unexampled energy to his look, action, and utterance. Bold, fervent, pungent, and popular in his eloquence, no other uninspired man ever preached to so large assemblies, or enforced the simple truths of the Gospel by motives so persuasive and awful, and with an influence so powerful on the hearers.

He died of asthma, Sept. 30, 1770;
suddenly exchanging his life of unparalleled labors
for his eternal rest.

In the summer of 1833, Dr. Porter saw fit to communicate for publication, his views on the subject of slavery, and the proposed plans for its removal from our country. It seems but justice to his memory that his views on this as on other important subjects, respecting which the sentiments of intelligent and conscientious men differ, should be distinctly presented to the reader. By all it must be admitted that his intimate acquaintance with southern institutions and manners, qualified him to form correct opinions on this subject; and his known benevolence and integrity, as well as his assertions, forbid the suspicion of apathy on his part, or of unwillingness frankly to utter the feelings of his heart. The expression of his views, was addressed to a committee of the students in the theological seminary. It is subjoined.

"To the Secretary of the Committee on Colonization.

"Dear Sir,

"I should have given an earlier reply to your note, but for unavoidable engagements, incident to my late absence from home. The same engagements will require the reply which I now give to be briefer than the importance of the subject may seem to demand. In all my intercourse with the South, I have rather avoided than invited discussion on the subject of slavery, because the intrinsic difficulties of the subject are great, and because the interference of northern or of any foreign influence, respecting it, is attended with peculiar delicacy. Yet I have settled opinions on all the points which you mention, and am not aware of any good reason why I should scruple to express these opinions in compliance with your request.

"In accordance with what I suppose to be the universal sentiment of enlightened men in the northern States, and to no small extent in the southern too, I think slavery a

very great national evil. The reasons why I think so, are too many to be exhibited at large, or even to be mentioned in this note. But I cannot doubt that the deleterious influence of slavery on the moral, intellectual, social, political, and pecuniary interests of every community where the system prevails, must, at no distant day, be so unquestionable, and so appalling, that there can be but one opinion on the subject in every quarter of the country.

"But you inquire, '*What would be the probable effect of the immediate emancipation of the slaves at the South?*'

"As I understand the phrase '*immediate emancipation,*' the thing is not inexpedient merely, but impossible. This any man must know, who has been personally conversant with the subject.

"Will it be said that Congress, by a sweeping enactment, might abolish slavery in one month through the United States? Congress will not do this. They have distinctly and often disclaimed their right to do it.

"Will it be said that the slave-holding States must, each for itself, forthwith abolish by law its own system of slavery? Who will execute this law, or who will make it, while the great majority of its citizens are opposed to the measure? Will it be said, the public sentiment of its citizens ought to be corrected? But while it remains as it is, how is the *immediate abolition* of slavery to be effected?

"Still some may inquire, Suppose the thing to be actually done, either with or without the consent of the masters, so that in one month all the slaves in the country should be free, what would be the consequence? To predict this with certainty, is beyond the province of human foresight. No event analogous to this has occurred since the world began; and therefore no page of its history sheds on the subject the light of experience. The most

sober and industrious part of these manumitted slaves, doubtless might be employed as the laboring peasantry of the country. Others, through indolence and intemperance, would die and putrify, like the frogs of Egypt. Others would betake themselves to forests and fastnesses, and live by plunder. These would be hunted, and manacled, and shot, by white men, in self-defence; till the bolder spirits among them, ripe for treason and violence, would organize an army of outlaws daring enough to execute purposes of desperate villany, at the thought of which the heart shudders.

"A general emancipation of slaves, therefore, to be consistent with such a regard to their good, and the public good, as humanity and religion demand, must plainly be a work of time. It must be accomplished by a wise system of moral influence, and of prospective legislation, and must allow opportunity for a preparatory change in the habits of a whole community.

"Your next inquiry respects, '*The influence on the South, of efforts in this quarter, by means of anti-slavery societies, publications, &c., to promote the abolition of slavery,—particularly the effect of these efforts on the slave population.*'

"Intelligent men in the South, do not deny to the people of non-slaveholding States, the right to think for themselves on this subject. But they say, We did not create slavery. It came down to us as a colonial inheritance from the mother country; and the cupidity of slave-dealers in the North, contributed to fasten it upon us. Here it is, an incubus, as you think, and as many of us think, on the energies and enterprise of our people; but the system is so interwoven with all our habits, that immediate abolition of it would tear up the foundations of society. We cannot, therefore, think it consistent with those obligations of kindness and generosity and good

neighborhood, which citizens of the same country owe to each other, for men who are as ignorant of the intrinsic delicacies of this subject, as they are remote from participation in its dangers and difficulties, to seize every opportunity of casting firebrands into the midst of our people.

"If men in Pennsylvania or Vermont choose to form an anti-slavery society, let them proceed according to elevated Christian principles. All rash denunciation, all acrimonious epithets, all disposition to distort single acts of cruelty into a general imputation on holders of slaves, are unwise and unjust. Like the caricatures of English travellers in this country, they provoke resentment without doing any imaginable good. If such societies choose to advocate their own principles through the press, let them keep strictly within the limits of truth and sober argument, and send their publications, not to servants, but in the most honorable and open manner, to their masters. All inflammatory statements, addressed to the former, or tending to excite them to rapine and bloodshed, if they do not subject their authors to indictment at common law for misdemeanor, certainly deserve the reprobation of an enlightened community. Deeply as I deplore the existence of slavery in my native country, I cannot hope to see its extinction, till the measures requisite for such a result shall be taken by the masters themselves; and I am certain that this result must be indefinitely retarded, by all rash and violent interference from other quarters. Insubordination in slaves, and of course increased rigor from their masters, will be the natural consequences of such interference.

"As to your third inquiry, respecting the *influence of the American Colonization Society*,—I must remark but briefly. In 1815, if I mistake not, the Rev. Samuel J. Mills returned from New Orleans through the southern

Atlantic States, with his far-reaching eye of benevolence fixed on this subject. After consultation with a few friends, and much prayer to God, his mind became settled; and as I have always understood, by the joint labors of himself and Rev. Dr. Finley, as primary instruments, the Colonization Society was established. It is needless and unseasonable here to discuss the principles, or the history of that society. To say that it cannot prove an adequate and immediate remedy for slavery, is in my opinion only to say there is no such remedy. It has set in motion a train of causes, that have already produced, and that promise by the blessing of God, still more extensively to produce, important results in behalf of the African race.

"It is my earnest hope, that in their efforts, as societies or individuals, to promote the welfare of this race, good men, live where they may in our common country, will act with a comprehensive view of all the great interests involved; and will especially avoid such collisions of influence, as will frustrate all the good purposes at which they aim.

"With best regards to the committee in whose behalf you have written, I am, very affectionately, yours, &c.

"E. Porter."

Dr. Porter was preparing to offer the public a new edition of Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, with such additions as its use for a series of years as a text book in his department, had suggested. The sketch of a preface to this work, the week before he died, was the last writing he performed.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

Remarks—Views of Dr. Porter's character—Comparative exemption from faults—Remarks—Epitaph.

In estimating the character of most men who have been distinguished for usefulness, it is common to dwell on certain qualities which possess so much prominence, as either to hide defects, or to throw minor excellences into the shade. In forming a just estimate of Dr. Porter, however, it is indispensable that we contemplate his character as a *whole*. Thus viewed, like a painting duly proportioned and colored, it appears more interesting and instructive, the more protracted and minute the scrutiny of the observer. Whether we contemplate him as a student acquiring an academic or professional education; as a Christian amid the trials and conflicts of the people of God; as a minister of the gospel; as a teacher or presiding officer of a theological seminary; as a friend or the head of a family; or as the advocate of good morals, philanthropy, and piety, there are distinct exhibitions of those elements of character which ensure distinguished usefulness, united in unusually just and harmonious proportions.

Two or three brief views of Dr. Porter's general character, sketched by men who speak from intimate personal acquaintance, it would be injustice to withhold from the reader. Says one of his pupils, now a professor in a theological seminary:—"My recollections of him are all

delightful; in part perhaps, because he honored me in an unusual degree with his confidence. But certainly, this alone could not have commanded my esteem, had he not possessed excellencies of mind and heart, which claimed my respect and won me to him.

"He was a consistent and enlightened Christian. He was the courteous and polished gentleman, unaffectedly simple in his manners, and kind and amiable in his feelings. He was active in doing good, and fruitful in good devices. He was the *father* of his pupils, and was relied on greatly for advice in seasons of difficulty, by all who knew him. He had much practical wisdom and good sense, and the church is not a little indebted to him for the influence he exerted in preserving her purity, in fostering her institutions, and in building up her fortresses of strength. The good man, the kind friend, the polished and wise teacher, the prudent counsellor, has passed away from us, and found his eternal home. But on how many minds has his unobtrusive influence been exerted, minds which are employed in the cause of God in every part of this continent and on heathen shores. And this influence will be perpetuated in future ages."

Says one of his earliest and most constant friends, the president of a college in New England:—"The nicely balanced *proportion* by which the various excellencies of his character were so remarkably adjusted to each other, though it perhaps made each one separately a less conspicuous object of admiration, yet gave to the whole assemblage a far higher value than it would have possessed, without this symmetry. I recollect no instance of a more happy combination of firmness, and decision, and independence of spirit, with that unaffected gentleness and kindness which gained the hearts of those with whom he had intercourse."

Another of his friends, occupying a similar station with the writer last quoted, remarks:—"Dr. Porter was too extensively known and revered and beloved, to need the slightest tribute of my humble pen; and yet, I may perhaps be allowed very briefly to express my high estimation of his great intellectual and moral worth. His death was a great loss to the church, for she has but few such men to lose. No one could know him intimately, without greatly esteeming him as a man, loving him as a friend, and confiding in him as a counsellor. Without being remarkably brilliant, either in conversation or in his public performances, he was always interesting and instructive. Undoubtedly he had more judgment than imagination—more strength than versatility. But if in its ordinary movements, his mind was neither rapid nor sparkling, it was eminently sagacious, patient, and sure. The first thoughts of some men are the best—but it was not so with Dr. Porter. He wanted to look at a subject on all sides, and to consider its remote, as well as its more immediate bearings and relations, before he gave his opinion or advice. Whatever he saw, he saw clearly, in its just proportions, and in its own proper place. The solidity of his understanding admitted of a high polish, and his taste was remarkably correct. He had strength to climb, where many who trusted to their slender and glossy pinions could never soar; and his pearls were of more intrinsic value than those of many others, which may have been brought up from greater depths.

"As a writer, Dr. Porter was always perspicuous, and generally nervous and concise. His thoughts on subjects which he had thoroughly investigated, were 'like apples of gold in pictures of silver.' As a preacher, he was dignified, earnest, instructive, and persuasive. He never drew a bow at a venture, and his aim was uncommonly steady and effective. The mere tinsel of rhetoric and

oratory he could not away with; but if genuine pulpit eloquence consists in the most important scriptural thoughts, well arranged, happily expressed, clearly enunciated, and solemnly applied, then was Dr. Porter an eloquent preacher.

"But it was the remarkable *symmetry* of his character, after all, which I most admired. Single prominent and striking features are not at all uncommon. But that exact and delicate harmony of proportions, which constitutes beauty and elegance of the highest order, is rarely to be met with. So in the far higher and nobler endowments of the intellect and the heart, it is much less difficult to find very great superiority over most men in some *one thing*, than to find the most desirable and useful talents symmetrically combined in the same individual. Perhaps there was no one faculty in the original structure of Dr. Porter's mind, which taken by itself, would have been considered extraordinary. It was something like what we call *effect* in architecture, that made him what he was in the eyes of the public. It was the existence, union, and happy development of excellent natural powers of mind, under the controlling and sanctifying influence of religion, which made him so eminently useful while he lived, and which have so preciously embalmed his memory."

There are few men in any department of action, a portraiture of whose character is not rendered more attractive by the omission of certain defects which appeared in real life. How few even among the wisest and the best, in whom, if contemplated in the family circle, among confidential friends, or in the various circumstances of their intercourse with others, failings are not discernible from which we could wish them exempt. That so little has been said in the Memoir of the defects of Dr. Porter, is not to be attributed to a belief on the part of the writer,

that he was not the subject of them, or to intentional concealment; but to the fact that, whatever those defects may have been, they were not so marked that they can be distinctly delineated, or they were so blended with various excellencies as to render their delineation a work of extreme delicacy and difficulty. Whenever the writer has attempted to exhibit the blemishes of the character presented on the preceding pages, he has uniformly met the obstacle to which one of Dr. Porter's colleagues alludes in the following sentences:—"Faults as a Christian and a man he doubtlessly had. But they were not of so specific a nature, nor so habitual, that I can distinctly portray them. I have tried to make out a description, but cannot make out one that has shade enough to be seen in the picture."

Would the reader, who was not acquainted with Dr. Porter, form a correct idea of the man; let him imagine a well proportioned, manly, but emaciated form, of about six feet in height, and with a countenance like that prefixed to the Memoir:—let him imagine that form endued with native independence, firmness, energy, candor, frankness, simplicity, and benevolence, united with an enlargement of mental vision, which intuitively perceived the relations and bearings of objects; regulated and controlled by that sound common sense which rightly apprehends circumstances, and adapts means to ends; the whole assemblage of attributes chastened and invigorated by Christian piety, sanctifying, ennobling, and giving impulse to the natural man,—let him contemplate this individual daily struggling with disease and suffering, in active, persevering, disinterested, holy effort; renouncing lawful indulgences; enduring incessant toil and weariness for others' good; living, in a word, 'not unto himself but unto God,' and he has the likeness of Dr. Porter.

The following appropriate epitaph is inscribed on the monument erected to his memory by the American Education Society, in the cemetery of the theological institution over which he presided.

On the west or front side:

SACRED
to the memory of
EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.
who died 1834, aged sixty-two years,
was graduated at Dartmouth College, 1792,
ordained as PASTOR at Washington, Conn., 1796,
inaugurated as PROFESSOR of Sacred Rhetoric in the Theological Seminary at Andover 1812,
appointed PRESIDENT of the same 1827.

On the right side:

Of cultivated understanding, refined taste, solid judgment, sound faith, and ardent piety;
Distinguished for strict integrity and uprightness, kind and gentle deportment, simplicity and godly sincerity;
A FATHER to the Institution with which he was connected,
A highly useful INSTRUCTOR,
A zealous PATRON of the benevolent Societies of the times in which he lived,
A true FRIEND to the temporal and eternal interests of his fellow beings;
Living, he was peculiarly loved and revered;
Dying, he was universally lamented.

On the left side:

THE
AMERICAN EDUCATION SOCIETY,
to whose use he bequeathed the greater part of his property,
in token of their high esteem and grateful
remembrance of his services and
bounties, have caused this
monument to be
erected.

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